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NOTES

ON THE

*WEST INDIES.*

VOL. II.



NOTES

OF THE

WEST INDIES

VOL. II

Strahan and Preston,  
Printers-Street, London.



NOTES  
ON THE  
*WEST INDIES:*

WRITTEN DURING THE  
EXPEDITION UNDER THE COMMAND  
OF THE LATE  
GENERAL SIR RALPH ABERCROMBY:

INCLUDING OBSERVATIONS ON  
THE ISLAND OF BARBADOES,  
AND THE SETTLEMENTS CAPTURED BY THE BRITISH TROOPS, UPON  
THE COAST OF GUIANA;  
LIKEWISE REMARKS RELATING TO THE  
CREOLES AND SLAVES OF THE WESTERN COLONIES, AND  
*THE INDIANS OF SOUTH AMERICA:*

WITH OCCASIONAL HINTS, REGARDING  
*The Seasoning, or Yellow Fever*  
OF HOT CLIMATES.

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By GEORGE PINCKARD, M. D.  
OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS,  
DEPUTY INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF HOSPITALS TO HIS MAJESTY'S FORCES,  
AND PHYSICIAN TO THE BLOOMSBURY DISPENSARY.

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

It is a strange thing that in sea-voyages, where there is nothing to be seene, but sky and sea, men should make diaries; but in land-trauaile, wherein so much is to be obserued, for the most part they omit it; as if chance were fitter to be registered than obseruation.

LORD VERULAM.

London:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME,  
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1806.







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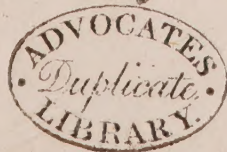
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## LETTER I.

*Author and his friends wait for General Whyte, and the Cork convoy. Friendly altercation between the Author and his comrades. Cork Fleet driven back to Cove. The Hindostan and Abergavenny arrive from Ireland. The Mary Isabella, from England, after a passage of fifteen weeks. Author and his comrades ordered upon duty. Troops arrive unhealthy. Two-deck ships bad transports. State of negroes in slave ships contrasted with soldiers in transports. Degree of heat March 23d. Remarks upon a French paper, complaining of the professional practice of the British medical officers in St. Domingo.*

Barbadoes, March.

**I** SHOULD have mentioned to you in my last letter, that from joining in the general greetings on the glad occasion of Sir R. Abercromby's long-expected arrival, and hoping to learn that we were immediately to proceed to St. Domingo, we lost no time in waiting upon the commander in chief, but went to pay our respects to him the day after he reached Barba-

does. I am sorry, however, to tell you, that we are still likely to be detained for some time in this Island, it being intended that we should wait the arrival of General Whyte, and the Cork division, and all proceed to St. Domingo under the same convoy.

I am happy to be able to announce to you that the ills of climate have, hitherto, scarcely reached me; but my friends Cleghorn and Master, I am sorry to remark, are greater sufferers than myself. All of us are annoyed by the prickly heat, and those tormenting insects the musquitoes; but, in Cleghorn, the prickly heat is so violent, as to become quite a sore eruption; and, on the legs of Master, the bites of musquitoes have produced very troublesome ulcers: also, in addition to these evils, both of my friends are frequently troubled with epistaxis\*; with which I have not been once attacked.

Regardless that they are more disturbed by the effects of climate than I am, they often amuse themselves at my continuing to observe an abstemious diet, and to persevere in my

\* Bleeding from the nose.



long established habit of drinking water ; and are even bold enough to propose that we should form a tontine, with the benefit of survivorship. “ Let us,” say they, “ enter into an engagement that he who lives longest shall be entitled to the clothes, arms, baggage, and horses of those who may chance to die, previous to our return to England.”—To this I tell them, I can see only one objection, viz. that it would encumber me with more red coats, and baggage, than I should know what to do with. They, laughing, assure me that I need have no such apprehension, and kindly promise—the one to preserve my sword, the other my pistols as “ a talisman, in memory of a friend, who sought his death - - - *by drinking water !*” —“ Water,” continue they, “ will render you the most palatable to the hungry devourer of these regions, and, of course, *you* will be his earliest prey.”—“ On the contrary, my friends,” I reply, “ you lay a bait for this ravenous destroyer, by preparing for him inviting juices, enriched with wine, and high essenced dishes ; for, like yourselves, he loves to indulge, and prefers wine and high flavored viands, to a more plain and simple diet—hence, instead of your dividing my sword and

pistols, the probability is that I shall return to England trebly armed."

Were it fit to take up this subject professionally, or to trouble you with medical discussions, I might shew some powerful reasons why I have a better chance of again seeing England, than either of my humorous and pleasant associates. Our comrade, Weir, smiles at our calculations, and being in a manner secure, from having undergone nine years seasoning at Jamaica, feels that he may have to return alone, and report the fate of us all.

Endless, surely, are to be the vexations and disappointments attending this expedition ! In every attempt, every branch of it would seem destined to meet with delay and disaster. In the papers, received by the last packet, we read that the Cork fleet, which we had flattered ourselves was within a few leagues of Barbadoes, has put back into Cove harbour. In this we have great and severe disappointment. It was the division with which we were to proceed to our place of destination, and from the ships which have already ar-



rived reporting so favorably of the voyage, and the weather, it is a mortification very unexpected. The Clarendon, the Charlotte, the Singleton and others having made an uncommonly quick passage, we had no suspicion but the winds must have been favorable for the whole convoy; and, making allowances for the delay of dull sailing vessels, felt assured that they must arrive in the course of a few days; hence the disappointment we experience is even greater than it was from hearing of the return of our own convoy under Admiral Christian.

Single ships, of each of the two fleets, still continue to arrive. The Hindostan and Abergavenny East Indiamen, and several transports have joined from Cork; and on the 25th, came in the Mary Isabella of the Portsmouth division. She sailed with us on the 9th of December, and has been a week longer on the voyage than the unfortunate General Cuyler, but precisely the same time at sea, having put into Lisbon disabled, and remained there three weeks, which reduces the period to twelve weeks, the exact time the General Cuyler was beating about upon the ocean.

It now remains to me to inform you that we have to bid adieu to our rural excursions, and maroon-like wanderings, about the pleasant island of Barbadoes : for it is ordered that the physicians of the St. Domingo staff shall confider themselves on duty, at the general hospital at St. Anne's Hill ; and it has fallen to my lot to be the first employed. We have also the further duty of inspecting the troops of the different ships of the Cork division as they come into harbour, in order to report their state of health, or disease. Luckily our residence, on board the Lord Sheffield, happens to be singularly convenient for the performance of these duties, and hence we hope to be able still to continue our social meetings ; and to live in the cool breeze, afloat, instead of being crowded in the close and heated town.

Being in the bay, we readily see every ship as it comes in, and can, conveniently, take off a boat to proceed upon our visit of inspection without delay : and we are not less happily placed for the hospital, being able to reach it in a boat, much quicker than we could walk to it from the town.



Sickness, I am sorry to remark, is already appearing among us. The hospitals are full, and some of the troops are obliged to quit their barracks, in order that these may, also, be converted into sick wards. But do not imagine that we are already suffering from disease of climate. It is not so. The malady, which now exists, has been brought with the troops. It is the common hospital or ship fever—is the consequence of the soldiers being long detained in crowded ships, and has nothing to do with *La Maladie du Pays*.

The ships of the Cork division, notwithstanding their quick passage, arrive in a very unhealthy state, but in these the troops must have been sickly when they embarked, or before they left the harbour; and, from the specimen we have in the Abergavenny and Hindostan, we have nothing favorable to expect from the seeming accommodation of employing these large vessels as troop ships. In none of the transports have we, yet, found the men more unhealthy: but, from the habits of cleanliness, commonly observed on board the East India ships, and, more especially, from that excellent officer General

Whitelock, and several other active and intelligent military officers being on board, no suspicion can be entertained of any of the rules of cleanliness or regularity having been neglected among the troops.

To me it has always appeared unwise to employ any ship as a transport, in which the men are obliged to sleep upon two different decks, both crowded, and the one below the other; and, from present appearances, this expedition promises to confirm the opinion.

Where from three hundred to five hundred men, in addition to the ship's company, have to make a passage in the same vessel, they cannot but be crowded; and if the weather should chance to be bad, it will be impossible to have the lower deck kept so clean, and well ventilated, as is requisite; and hence from many of the soldiers becoming sick; from their taking food in their sleeping births; and crowding themselves with knapsacks, blankets, and other baggage; and from multitudes breathing together, in a close and confined place, the air must, very quickly, be



rendered unwholesome, and disease will, necessarily, be generated. Where there are two decks it is also more difficult to keep the men sufficiently exposed to the open atmosphere, as the idle and disobedient can more easily conceal themselves, and remain below throughout the day.

The difference, in point of health, is peculiarly striking between the troops conveyed in transports from England, and the slaves brought in the Guinea ships from Africa. Perhaps, from the present mode of conducting the slave ships, might be derived some useful hints for the management of our transports. The slaves are much more crowded than the soldiers, yet far more healthy. It becomes us therefore to ascertain the cause of this, and I much suspect that it will be found in the difference of treatment and accommodation. According to the present method of conducting them, I might venture it as an opinion that a Guinea ship would carry—with less danger of disease being generated among them—a cargo of slaves more than thrice as numerous as a transport would carry of soldiers.

I took occasion to note to you in a former letter that the nakedness of the slaves was perhaps their greatest security against disease : but in addition to their being without clothes, they are compelled to remain constantly upon deck in the day-time ; and are encouraged to exercise and amusement : their sleeping places are completely washed out as soon as they quit them ; and no species of baggage, nor clothing—not a bundle, nor any article of bedding—not even a single blanket, nor a sheet, nor any kind of thing that can create filth, or collect impurities is admitted. Ventilation and washing are strictly observed, and the slaves are encouraged, or compelled to cleanliness of person : and, together with these means, perhaps their simple diet of vegetables and water may greatly contribute, by diminishing the predisposition, and lessening the susceptibility of disease.

Hence it would seem that cleanliness, exercise, cheerfulness, a simple diet, and free exposure to the atmosphere are the great preventives of sickness—and that by a strict observance of these means the slaves make the voyage, from Africa to the West Indies,



without engendering infectious maladies, although infinitely more crowded, than troops on board even the most confined transport.

Many causes conspire to prevent these grand objects from being equally attained by the foldiers ; but it is a desideratum, even, to approach them. Were I to enter into a detail of all that might be offered upon this very important subject, instead of a letter I should write you a volume. The difference of climate, of habit, of education, and of diet would all require to be taken into the discussion ; but it were foreign to our present purpose to engage in so extensive an inquiry. I may, therefore, content myself with adding that, both in regard to transports, and barracks, the service would reap the most essential benefit, were the rules, which might be prescribed by its medical officers, strictly enjoined ; and policy, no less than humanity would seem to demand it.

I must not forget to note to you, that the 23d instant was the hottest day we have felt, since our arrival between the tropics. In

the morning the thermometer stood at 73, and the weather was pleasantly cool, but it afterwards grew very close, and the little air that was stirring, coming from the south, we all felt the temperature much increased, and every one complained of excessive heat. We were on shore during the morning, but having left our thermometers in the ship, had not the opportunity of observing the degree of heat, either in the town, or the bay: from our feelings, compared with the preceding days, we judge it to have been at least 86.

Although it was unusually hot and oppressive in Bridge Town, we perceived a strong difference, indeed found a tolerable breeze, in the more elevated part of the country. We took our dinner at Dr. Hinde's, which I before mentioned to you is some miles from the town, and so far from feeling the heat oppressive, there, we were not at all incommoded by it. Thirteen persons sat down to table, and I remarked that not one of the party had occasion to use his handkerchief, in a way that might have shocked the delicacy of a Chesterfield.

What would you think were I to conclude my letter by noting to you a mark of great *modesty* in a Frenchman? Perhaps you will say it is a rare instance; or that you never met with—never heard of such a thing! If so, call it assurance, impudence, or what you like, and I almost promise to forgive you!

A paper, said to be of high importance, has been presented for our consideration. It was sent from St. Domingo to England: and lo! what should this important communication prove to be, but a direct and indiscriminate attack upon the practice of all the British medical officers who have, hitherto, been employed with the troops in St. Domingo, written by a French practitioner of the island; who, without knowing what means had been used, in the treatment of disease, illiberally condemns the whole practice, arrogantly setting forth his own as more wise and more beneficial. Need I have told you that the *modest* author is a Frenchman? We know not the name of this would-be Hippocrates: but as we have found his statements to be not simply inaccurate, but wholly devoid of truth, I think you will allow that we have been merciful towards



him, in only remarking that the very curious paper laid before us, must have been "the production of some prejudiced individual, who had not troubled himself to obtain any knowledge whatever, of the practice which, probably from *motives of interest*, he had presumed to condemn."

## LETTER II.

*Author apprehensive of fatiguing his friend with tales of delay and disappointment. A fleet of merchantmen arrives at Barbadoes after a short passage. The heavens and the seas exclusively opposed to the convoys of the expedition. Supply of provisions and stock at Barbadoes. Single ships of the convoys still continue to arrive. George and Bridget reaches Carlisle Bay. This ship singularly the seat of incident and disaster. Character of Mac—. His adventures and vexations concerning a crew.*

Barbadoes, March 30.

I FEAR you will be tired of reading tales of disappointment and uncertainty, which, as I before observed, would seem to know no end. On the morning of the 28th inst. we saw an ensign hoisted at the fort, and heard three guns fired; which constitute the signal of alarm implying a strange fleet to be in sight. It was, immediately, concluded that it was the Cork convoy, and its arrival was readily explained, by supposing it to have put to sea again, quickly after its return to harbour, and to have availed itself of the favorable wind which had

already brought to us so many single ships of that division. Dr. Cleghorn and myself happened to be on our way to the hospital, and on reaching St. Anne's hill we had a most splendid view of about eighty ships sailing smoothly below us, spreading their white canvases along the coast of the Island, as they proceeded towards the harbour. Our expectations now seemed confirmed. It must be the Cork fleet: and we felt assured of a speedy departure for St. Domingo! But our measure of vexation was not yet filled. Judge of our disappointment on finding it to be only a fleet of merchantmen! Never perhaps was expectation so often raised, and so repeatedly disappointed, as regarding the unhappy convoys of this great and threatening armament.

After spending nearly six months in vain attempts to make the passage, we are told that the two great divisions of our expedition are still lying in harbour, only *preparing* to put to sea; and amidst all the storms and perils which have so constantly opposed the progress of the ships of war, and the transports, our mortification is increased by finding that a fleet of slow sailing traders, could make the voyage,



with great facility, in the short period of thirty days. We learn, from these merchantmen, that the convoys were expected to put to sea, again, in about ten days, from the time they came away.

Every week, nay, almost every day, since the middle of the month of September, have we heard of these fleets being *about to sail* in the course of a few days, and now, after six months of daily and anxious expectation, and of as constant disappointment, it is again said that they were to put to sea in about ten days.

It would seem that the very elements had been set in hostile array, exclusively, against the expedition, and that it only required the sailing of the convoys to provoke the wrath of the winds, and of angry ocean. Amidst all the vexatious delays, that continue to occur, it is mortifying to discover that not one of the troop ships has made the passage with this fortunate fleet of merchantmen—which sailed from Spithead on the 27th of February, and reached Barbadoes early on the 28th of March.

After breakfast we went on shore to make our marketings and to learn all the additional news brought by the fleet, which had now come to anchor. The streets of Bridge-town were crowded, and the markets over-run with strangers. Not a fish—nor a joint of meat was to be had. A single chicken was all we could procure.

Barbadoes is the best supplied of all our colonies to windward of Jamaica. The island abounds with provisions and stock; but from the late repeated, and multiplied arrivals, and from a numerous fleet being so long detained in the bay, the demand has been so great that a degree of scarcity, or, at least, that mark of it, an increased and extravagant price begins to prevail.

In the course of the day on which the fleet of merchantmen arrived, a sadly terrifying scene occurred in the harbour. The sound of an alarm-bell was heard, from one of the transports, and a dread sensation was instantly diffused throughout the bay. All hands hastened upon deck, and every ship appeared thronged with anxious multitudes, eagerly looking out for the

cause of alarm. The transport was on fire, and from the crowded state of the harbour, and the immense quantity of gun powder on board the fleet, our situation became sadly terrific : we were all in danger of being blown up in one great explosion. Never was a moment of more extreme peril and anxiety. The vessel was rapidly consuming, and on every quarter she was closely surrounded by others ; it was therefore expected that the flames would spread throughout the harbour. Fortunately the efforts of those who were near were not paralysed by the shock. Boats were quickly manned on every side, and sent with all possible dispatch to the relief of the transport ; and most happily, by the boldness and activity of the seamen, the fire was extinguished before it reached any of the other vessels.

Single ships of the Cork division still continue to join us ; and among them we now find the George and Bridget with hospital stores, having our comrade Henderson on board. The George and Bridget, as I before remarked to you, is a large North country ship,



of vast bulk, very unwieldy, and manifestly a slow sailer. Her cabin is not conveniently fitted up, but appears heavy and sombre, and calculated to convey gloomy impressions. This ship has been quite the seat of incident. I am not sure whether she, originally, sailed with the fleet in November. If she did, she returned to Spithead after the storm, and there waited the second sailing of the convoy in December.—On the 9th of that month she left England, in company with us, but being disabled in one of the gales, which early beset our fleet, she put back into Cove harbour ; and, there, finding the Cork division preparing for sea, and, like herself, destined for St. Domingo, she did not hasten to sail again, and follow us, alone ; but waited to put herself under the protection of the Cork convoy. During this delay it was that our assistant Mac—found her out, and obtained a birth on board.

With the Cork fleet, which was termed the St. Domingo division of the expedition, the George and Bridget again went to sea, and, again, was compelled to put back in consequence of bad weather.

Only two days had passed, from the time of leaving the harbour, when a signal was made for the fleet to wear, and return to Cove. The weather being, at the time, uncommonly thick and hazy, several of the ships ran foul of each other: one went directly aboard the unwieldy George and Bridget, which was ever in the way of accident and disaster, and had it not been a much lighter vessel, than herself, must have sunk her, with all hands, to the bottom. As it was, she stove in her side, and left an unseemly mark of injury, which she still bears about her. The wind being scarcely more favorable for returning than for advancing, several of the ships were unable to make the harbour; and from being obliged to keep at sea, they stood on and effected the passage alone,—which explains the circumstance of so many single ships of this convoy having arrived in Carlisle bay.

The George and Bridget, after her unfortunate accident, reached so near the harbour as to take a pilot on board to carry her in—but from the wind veering round, and blowing strong against them, *poor Patrick* the pilot, in steering for Cove harbour, stood across the

Atlantic, and committed the blunder of carrying himself out to the West Indies. True it is that the accident might have occurred upon any other coast, or to a man of any other nation—but the pilot happening to be from *dear Cork itself*, the poor fellow, you will readily imagine, is teased by the sailors, as having practised something very like—a *Bull*!

We have been diverted at hearing the circumstance related: but we have strong feelings of sympathy towards the unfortunate pilot, and his family; for his wife and children are left in the distressful situation of not knowing how to account for his absence. He had hoped to return home, by getting on board some vessel upon the passage, but none fell in their path, and it now remains for him to take a view of the bay, into which he has steered, and return to tell the tale at Cove - - - as soon as he can.

During the time the George and Bridget remained foul of the ship which ran aboard her, and which in addition to the blow of her side, carried away her fore rigging, two of the sailors, from the other vessel, while in the at-



tempt to clear her, stepped on board the George and Bridget, and the ship happening at that moment to get afunder, these men were separated from their own vessel, and, compelled like the pilot, to take an unexpected passage in the George and Bridget, to Barbadoes—their own captain supposing them to have fallen overboard, or been in some way the victims of the accident.

*How was what followed like a page 5*

Our lost assistant, poor Mac—who was left behind in consequence of going to Portsmouth in search of our cow, just as the ship was getting under weigh, is also among the unexpected passengers on board the eventful George and Bridget. After many unsuccessful attempts to overtake the Lord Sheffield he felt happy in meeting with a vessel with some of his comrades on board; and having discovered this ship it had been extremely difficult to convince him that no birth could be had on board. His foot once upon deck, all further concern respecting accommodations was quickly removed. The narrative of his adventures, with and without the cow, has diverted us exceedingly. To comprehend his urgent proceedings, and rapid movements, it were necessary to know something of his figure and character. He is

a little fat, sturdy man, of short, punch-like figure, between thirty and forty years of age, with a vast deal of good humour and willing activity about him—bustling, well intending, and officiously desirous to be useful. He is confident, and presumptuous, yet possesses a degree of personal timidity bordering upon superstition. Abruptly familiar with those he seeks, he grows importunate and attaches himself even to annoyance; being one of those people who have more of freedom than good manners—perfect masters in ease, and as perfectly ignorant in politeness. He is of that class which possesses more of willingness than judgment—more of haste, than order; one of those who engage with bold confidence, in whatever presents itself, without looking to the event, or observing any thing of method in the execution;—who are ever ready to plunge into difficulties, without a thought how to subdue them.

The same sanguine feelings which lead him into difficulties, tend to support him through them. Not being of a disposition to brood over his distresses, he is seldom the subject of dismay, or the victim of sombre reflec-

tion. Involved in one dilemma, he commonly escapes from it by rushing headlong into a greater, and often by entailing future troubles, blunders on to his object—overcoming every impediment by forcing circumstances through all hazards to the end proposed ; then, forgetful of the new difficulties he has created, piques himself upon the merit - - - of having accomplished his design ! His woes, you will believe, are frequent, but they are, also, transitory. He requires not the patient endurance of philosophy to support them—they pass quickly away in all the hurry of thoughtless indifference.

From this sketch of his character you will learn, without surprize, that pecuniary difficulties have led to his present humble appointment. He had settled himself in busy London, in a situation of respectability, and which promised early independence ; but from thoughtless habits, and a disposition ever regardless of the morrow, became involved beyond the power of extricating himself, and, at length, brought on ills, which he now seeks to fly from, rather than hopes to remedy.



With several other gentlemen of the hospital-staff, to whom the fore-cabin was allotted, Mac—was ordered to take his passage in the Lord Sheffield; and feeling both pleased and proud to be in the same ship with the person who had the direction of the department, to which he belonged, he was always at hand when any thing occurred,—always first to tender either useful, or officious services.

It being an essential comfort to have plenty of milk on the passage, we had purchased a cow to take on board, as the best method of securing the accommodation; but owing to some neglect, on shore, our valued animal had not reached the Lord Sheffield at the time the signal was made for sailing. This was a sad disappointment to us: for, to lose our cow were a serious misfortune—even the apprehension of it was matter of much anxiety. We applied to the captain to know how we could proceed with the greatest probability of procuring her; who, saying that it was not an object for which he could delay the ship, added that the only chance of

having our milk was by sending off some person, instantly, to Portsmouth, who would bring the cow, without a moment's delay. Mac— hearing this, and being always desirous to make himself useful, immediately volunteered his services—nothing doubting of success. A boat, returning to the shore, was accordingly hailed, and away hurried Mac—for the cow ; not once dreaming of the possibility of failure, nor that there could be any risk of his being left behind. The cow ! the cow ! he had no other idea—nothing but the cow occupied his mind ! In the same unthinking haste in which he left the ship did he bustle on when he reached the shore. Proceeding without plan, and without thought, he looked only to the cow, and, in his hurry to bring her before the eye, neglected the means of conveying her to the ship. The propriety of engaging a boat, to return in, not once occurred to him—no sooner did he reach the water's edge, than he jumped on shore, and ran off in search of the person's home, from whom the cow had been purchased : but he now discovered that, in his hurry, he had only carelessly listened to the address ; and

consequently much time was lost in finding out the house.

It happened, when, at length, he came to it, that the man was from home : and, here, he fell into another error. Instead of sending some one to fetch him, or taking with him some person who knew where to meet with the man, he, in all the impetuosity of thoughtless speed, blundered into further delay by running into the town, alone, to seek him : and after losing much time in finding him, instead of promoting all possible dispatch, and urging the man to the utmost expedition, he detained him, in tedious and useless explanations, as to the cause of his not sooner sending the cow on board. Another half hour was consumed in fruitless parley, when they reached the house ; and, there, feeling secure in having the cow and her master near him, it occurred to Mac— that after all these exertions he required some refreshment, and, forgetting the pressure of the moment, he, again, added to the delay by, quietly, sitting down to relieve the calls of his stomach.



During all this time poor busy thoughtless Mac— never recollected that he had no boat hired, nor any means secured of taking the cow off to the ship. He had urged on, straight forward, and now, seeing the man, and the cow before him, felt as certain of success as though the undertaking had been completed.

The cow was, at last, led down to the beach, and, on arriving with her at the water's edge, poor unthinking Mac— met with new difficulties, to which the confident security of his vacant mind had lent no expectation. Yet they proved to be more insurmountable than any he had encountered, being of a nature equally unyielding to sober circumspection, as to the storming assaults by which he, commonly, forced the obstacles that opposed him. It was the hurried moment of departure. The fleet, obeying the signal for sailing, was crowding, in full canvass, out of the harbour, and all the cutters, boats, scullies—every vessel capable of carrying an oar, or a sail, was gone off, at an exorbitant hire, with some one in danger of being left behind. No boat was to be had, at any price! This was an

impediment which might easily have been prevented, but it was an obstacle in Mac—'s broad path, which had never entered into his calculations. Still it could neither be removed, nor trampled down. Method and force—prudence and rashness were here equally unavailing. It was an obstruction which could neither be overcome by rude, nor systematic means. Mac— was now arrived at his ultimatum—checked by the ocean, he could no longer blunder on. He cursed, and raved, and swore, and implored the people standing by, all to no purpose! Prayers and imprecations were alike fruitless. Every boat was gone! Thus arrested, and unable to force circumstances further to his end, giddy Mac— became almost frantic, and seeing the ships rapidly getting out to sea, he gave vent to his feelings in all the acuteness of unexpected disappointment. Storming with rage, he swore and prayed alternately—now cursed the cow; then abused the man—ran into the different shops uttering lamentations—plied every one passing with questions—begged the boatmen to give him assistance—offered persuasions, entreaties, rewards—but all in vain! None

could give him aid. No boat remained—nor any possible means of getting either himself or the cow to the ship.

He observed the fleet putting to sea; fancied he saw the Lord Sheffield dropping down to St. Helen's, and loudly deplored the loss of his passage; then, turning to the cow, renewed his curses upon her, for detaining him; and, again, loaded the man with oaths for not sooner taking her on board. It, also, now occurred to his recollection, that he was separated from his baggage, and would have to remain without a change of garment throughout the voyage; and again he appealed to the boatmen in anxious solicitude; some of whom only smiled at his dilemma, while some regarded him with cold indifference, and others, more awake to his distress, endeavoured to soothe, and encourage him with hope. What can I do? good fellows! cried poor defeated Mac—, what shall I do? what can I do? d—n this cow? shall I, sailors! must I lose my passage? Can none of you help me—shall I, must I be left behind?

The fleet still advanced. The full can-



vass spread every mast, and the ships, in crowded succession, continued to put to sea. Poor Mac—looked steadfastly towards them—his eye intent upon the Lord Sheffield; then, suddenly turning round, he again saw the patient cow, who, equally unconscious of his distress, as that she was the cause of it, had quietly laid herself down to ruminate her cud, upon the sands. Finding new provocation in the poor animal's composure, I shall, exclaimed Mac—I must, I shall be left behind! Curse that cow; d—n the cow! I shall, I shall be left behind! Then again turning to the boatmen he solicited them, in new entreaties, to take him off with, or without the cow—forgetting how useless it were to urge the men, when there was nothing to be had in the shape of a boat.

Still the little, fat, improvident man cursed and swore and stamped and stormed—begged, entreated, and implored; but all to no purpose. The stumbling block of impossibility was in his path: and it might have taught him that engagements are, sometimes, more easily undertaken, than accomplished: but it was not among his qualities - - - to benefit by experience!

The Lord Sheffield was delayed until nearly the last ship, in the hope of our seeing Mac—and the Cow; and we thought him a tedious time before he returned. At length the anchor was up, and the sails spread. We now looked anxiously to the shore. The day was wearing away; and no Mac—, no cow appeared! The captain could not—dared not wait any longer! Quickly, therefore, we were under weigh, and had only the hope that Mac—and the boat might steer direct for St. Helen's, and meet us as we advanced from the Mother-bank. But still, poor fellow! he remained in great tribulation upon the shore. No boat could be had, and the only ray of hope, conveyed to him, was from a remark of the boatmen, that, as many of the ships were getting out to sea, some of the boats could not fail to be soon back. He caught eagerly at this idea, which, plain and simple as it was, had not once suggested itself to his mind, and, appropriating it with all the sanguine feelings of his nature, again hailed the certainty of soon overtaking us.

Presently a boat arrived, but it was only a small one, with oars. Still a boat it was, and

Mac— without considering whether or not it was fit for his purpose, impulsively ran down and jumped into it—calling to the men to take him to the Lord Sheffield! This they observed was impossible, for, even if they had time to reach her, which they had not, their boat could not live so far out at sea, as where the ship would be before they could come up with her.—This was a sad blow to his revived expectations, and he pressed the men to engage in the attempt, making them great offers of reward, but they were inflexible, and advised him, as his only chance, to wait until a lugger, or some larger boat with sails should come in.

The poor cow still lay quietly masticating her food upon the sands, and Mac— in great fatigue and all the chagrin of disappointment, sat himself down, less patiently, to ruminate a more bitter cud.

Other small boats arrived, but the men who came in them offered the same objections as the former, and but little encouraged the faint hope of even a lugger being able to come up with the fleet; so rapidly were the ships getting out to sea.



But Mac— saw no difficulty, provided he could only prevail upon the crew of any boat to take him from the shore. He still looked towards us, and still fancied that he distinguished our ship, lying to waiting for him and the cow. Again, and again he solicited the boatmen to take him off, either with, or without the cow. But all was unavailing; the ships would, necessarily, be at sea, before the boats could get near them; and to overtake the Lord Sheffield was, absolutely, impossible. Poor Mac—, at length, began to discover that he had proceeded rashly, and without well calculating the means of success: but he still cursed the unconscious cow, and abused the fates for the loss of his passage, and his baggage!

Thus it ever is with the improvident— whether regarding his time, his fortune, or his pursuits. The errors of imprudence he never fails to attribute to misfortune, and he unjustly charges upon the fates what is only the result of his own folly or neglect. And, here, my friend, I cannot but remark how common it is to others, as well as to our thoughtless Mac— to quarrel with misfortune, whenever

they are overtaken by the consequences of their misconduct. No important personage is so unhandfomely, or so unjustly treated as that poor, and modest young lady *Miss-fortune*. All the errors, and even the crimes of those indiscreet damsels *Miss-usage*, and *Miss-conduct*, are laid to her charge; and, however frequently, however grievously the imprudent suffer from committing themselves to the guidance of these deceitful jilts, still are they so infatuated as to prostrate themselves at their feet, and blindly attribute all the ills they suffer from them, to the more chaste, and innocent *Miss-fortune*. How often do the unthinking and the profligate cry aloud against misfortune, for bringing upon them the evils, which were the plain and necessary consequence of their own folly, or depravity; and which even the smallest share of common discretion might, with the utmost certainty, have prevented!

If, instead of thoughtlessly blundering into various and unnecessary delays, our hurrying Mac— had first engaged a proper vessel for taking off the cow, or even detained the boat which had carried him on shore, he might have saved himself the accumulated vexation,

fatigue, and anxiety which were the natural effect, and the necessary sequel of his method of proceeding; and not, as he insisted, of misfortune!

He now began to perceive that he was left in England, with all his clothes and baggage gone to the West Indies, and forgetting, for a moment, his present difficulties—forgetting the cow, and all around him, he sunk into pensive contemplation, upon the various evils which might follow, when he was, suddenly, roused by the cry of “a lugger, a lugger, here comes a lugger.” It made no part of Mac—’s character to lose time in useless bewailings. If a new path presented itself, however rugged or impassable—if but the slightest opening occurred, however faint the gleam of light admitted, he, hastily, pursued it, dashing, heedlessly, on to his object.—Hence on hearing that a lugger was in sight, sanguine hope again assumed the form of certainty, and without a moment of hesitation, to weigh probabilities, he resolved, at all hazards, in defiance of all doubts, and at whatever expence, to take off the cow in the lugger the moment it reached the shore. The vessel was, accord-



ingly, hailed as it came in, and the men were desired not to let go the anchor ; but to “ take the gentleman, and the cow on board, and return immediately to the fleet.” The crew expressed many apprehensions of not being able to reach the ship ; and demanded an exorbitant sum, even, to make the attempt. Mac— would hear no objections : there could be no obstacle—no difficulty ! He would give them any reward ; and go they must. “ Take me and the cow on board—take us off—carry us out towards the fleet, and I’ll give you any thing” was all he had to say, and all the agreement he required.

Some delay, necessarily, occurred in getting the cow into the boat, although as little as possible ; and Mac —, most joyfully, jumped in after her. All was now certain. Every terror vanished. He regained all his powers, and feeling confident of success became clamorous and bustling as ever. He entreated the boatmen to be active—related to them his anxieties and disasters, stormed them with idle questions, hurried them with persuasions, and encouraged them with offers of reward. Still their fears hung heavy upon them. They pro-

mised exertion, but doubted success. The Lord Sheffield failed well : she also laid near to the wind, and, not to lose any further time, we steered direct for St. Helen's. Unluckily for poor Mac, — his delay had exhausted our patience, and despairing both of our milk, and our messenger, we had already passed Spithead, and were advancing into deeper water, and heavier seas.

Mac— was yet very distant, and, the boatmen's doubts increasing, his confidence gave way to restless solicitude. He looked out anxiously for the Lord Sheffield, and implored the men to hoist every sail, and pull hard at every oar : then, growing more and more restless, he jumped up, sat down, asked questions, cursed the fates, looked up to the sails, cast his eye down to the oars, used persuasions, promised rewards, and exhibited every trait of anxious disquietude.

At length he descried the Lord Sheffield ! She was very far ahead, but creative fancy saw her lying-to waiting for the lugger. Mac— 's declining hopes were again assured— no doubt remained, and pointing out the ship to the

boatmen he insisted that they might soon be up with her. The men used all their efforts, and still proceeded, although they could not discover that the ship was waiting. Mac— was certain the boat gained upon us. The men thought otherwise, and feared it would be impossible to reach us: but Mac— had never believed in impossibilities! The Lord Sheffield was before them, and in sight, and hence they could, and must overtake her! He insisted upon their going on, and urgently implored them to use every possible endeavour. Encouraged by his promises, and not insensible to his earnest solicitude, they stretched every sail to its utmost thread, and pulled with all their might at the oars: but every effort was in vain. We had now abandoned every hope of seeing our cow; the sails were full spread; and we were standing on our passage. In fine we were at sea, and had lost both our milk, and our assistant.

The boatmen found that they were advanced into deep water. The oars became useless, and the rolling seas which beat against the boat impeded her progress. The ship out-failed her, and she evidently fell astern. All



further pursuit was hopeless, and the boatmen unwillingly gave up the chase. Even Mac — whose expectations, when he first descried the ship, had assured him of success, now discovered that the further he advanced, the further he was left behind.

Ever without deliberation, poor unhappy man, he now yielded to the impulse of disappointment, and threw himself down in the boat, in all the anguish of despair, lamenting his cruel fortune, and cursing his thoughtless head, for not having secured a boat when first he reached the shore. But as it was not among his qualities to profit by experience, he precipitated himself, in the very next step of his proceedings, into further error and confusion. To deliberate was no part of his system. Ever adventurous, and devoid of method, he rushed head-long into a gulf yet deeper and deeper ; although a single moment of steady contemplation might have extricated him from all his troubles.

When the pursuit was found to be fruitless, and he despaired of coming up with the Lord Sheffield, instead of desiring to be put

on board any other vessel of the fleet which they might be able to fetch, and from which he might have removed to our ship, any fine day upon the voyage, he ordered the boatmen to carry him back to Portsmouth and there, likewise, instead of applying to the agent to give him a passage, in any vessel that might be delayed behind the fleet ; he returned the cow to her home, and wildly took a boat to the Isle of Wight, fancying that, from some part of the opposite coast of the island, he might be able to reach the Lord Sheffield. This he had heard mentioned, as barely possible, and despising all doubts and difficulties, instantly embraced it as certain.

He paid off the lugger, and hired a different boat to carry him to the island. This again consumed time, and every moment of delay lessened the slight probability he had of success. On reaching the Isle of Wight he had to journey many miles, across the island, to attain the port from whence he purposed to embark. He accordingly hired a horse, and rushing on, as usual, without thought, forgot to take any person to bring it back again.

But little time was consumed in galloping across the island, and on reaching the seaport he discovered some ships of the fleet, not far distant from the shore. In his mind slight probabilities amounted to a confirmation of success, and hence the bare appearance of ships, was, instantly, construed into a certainty of getting on board the Lord Sheffield.

Leaving the horse he knew not how, nor with whom, he went into a boat, and again put to sea, desiring the men to take him "to the Lord Sheffield, which was about to pass that way." Again, instead of adopting the more prudent and certain method of getting on board the first ship of the fleet they could reach, and going, from her, to the Lord Sheffield on the passage, he employed the boatmen, for hours, in the fruitless pursuit of looking for our ship; forgetting, what was actually the case, that we might have passed the slow sailing vessels of the convoy, and have advanced beyond that part of the island.

The day declined; the sun was sinking into the ocean; and night coming on; when our tormented Mac—again found himself the



victim of disappointed hopes, and ardent expectations. Still it never occurred to him that he might have made one of the dull-sailing vessels, and have saved his passage. In bitter chagrin, and sadness of spirit, he returned to the shore : but not to deliberate upon the next best plan of proceeding, for, even yet, he was deaf to experience. Like a Frenchman he was not long the subject of despondency, but, in defiance of all fatigue, and without discussing any of the probabilities, he again rushed into new and ill-planned adventures. If one project failed—he believed that he had only to fly to another.

After some trouble he found the horse, he had so thoughtlessly left behind. And although it was late, and grown almost dark, he galloped across the island, and again took off a boat to Portsmouth : from whence he, absurdly, set off the next morning for Plymouth, in the wild certainty of being able to get on board the Lord Sheffield, from thence. Upon his arrival, some ships were seen at a great distance from the shore, and it was not easy to ascertain whether they belonged to our convoy ; but Mac— was not apt to doubt, and with

discretion he held no sort of acquaintance. Certainties alone were his associates. He saw every thing plain before him, and believed that he need only put out his hand to possess it. It must be the fleet! These ships were certainly of the convoy, and the Lord Sheffield as certainly one of them. Another boat was accordingly hired, and he insisted upon going out to sea in order to be put on board. It is unaccountable that, even yet, it should not have occurred to him to go on board any ship of the convoy, which they might be able to make. But no! he was sure of the Lord Sheffield—his baggage was on board the Lord Sheffield—and the Lord Sheffield was - - - - - the only ship upon the ocean! Were it possible to reach any part of the fleet, it must be equally so to gain the Lord Sheffield. But, to his further disappointment, we had again outfailed his speed, and had passed beyond the port from whence he failed to meet us. The vessels seen were a few of the very dullest sailors of the convoy—and even these were probably too far out at sea to be overtaken in a boat. Yet the boatmen, either from believing it possible to come up with them—or from availing themselves of Mac—’s eager impetuosity, to their

own profit, rather countenanced than discouraged his hopes. It required but little to assure him of what he so ardently wished, and in full certitude, under severe fatigue, and without food, did he continue sailing about throughout the greater part of the day—supporting both hunger and exertion by the animating hope of success.

Unluckily the boatmen who had flattered his prospects, were afterwards seized with doubts : The ships were too far out at sea : the tide was against them : the wind was shifting : it was growing calm : they should not be able to get back by night, and other difficulties and objections occurred to oppose their proceeding further. Indeed the prospect of reaching the fleet, evidently grew less and less, until at length Mac— himself acknowledged it to be impossible.

His dilemma was now at the highest : what to do, or how to proceed he knew not. The Lord Sheffield was gone ; his baggage was on board ; and he - - - - left behind ! All his efforts had proved unsuccessful—all his hopes fallacious. He returned on shore, ac-



cusing his unluckly stars, and blaming fortune for all his disappointments. To most men such a situation would have been very painfully distressing. He was thrown into a distant part of the country—far from his home and his friends. He had lost his clothes—was absent from his duty—out of the way of every opportunity of following the convoy, and, worst of all, had spent every farthing of his money. But he was not easily dismayed. It now occurred to him that a fleet, bound to St. Domingo, was on the eve of sailing from Cork ; and, proceeding in all the precipitation of his former movements, he, instantly, adopted the resolution of journeying to Ireland, to join the Cove convoy. How to get money would have been a difficulty to most men ; but diffidence was not Mac —'s greatest failing ; he therefore did not lose time by delaying at Plymouth, waiting remittances to enable him to proceed further, but he went boldly to a gentleman of the town, related the tale of his woes, excited his compassion, and, obtaining his confidence, procured from him the means of defraying his expences to Ireland. His purse being, thus, replenished, his cares were quickly dissipated : and he took his de-

parture for Cork, under hopes no less extravagant, than those which had led him to the Isle of Wight, and to Plymouth ; for the Cork fleet was already reported to have failed, and the probability was, that under all circumstances, it would be gone before he could possibly reach Cove harbour. He travelled with little delay to Milford-Haven ; whence he embarked in the packet for Waterford ; and thence pursued his journey to Cork, and to Cove. Fortunately the convoy had not failed, and he found the whole fleet still lying in harbour, also many vessels of the Portsmouth convoy, which had been obliged to put back, after the early storms to which they had been exposed.

All former troubles and disappointments, and even the poor ill-tokened cow were now soon forgotten. The greater part of the St. Domingo hospital staff was with the Cork convoy ; and Mac— was not of a disposition to be long a stranger among his comrades. Looking out for a ship, in which to procure a passage, he discovered the George and Bridget, and, knowing Dr. Henderson and others of the hospital-staff to be on board, he, without hesitation, applied to the captain for a

birth, repeating his adventures, with and without the cow, as his passport. The captain had, already, his full complement of passengers on board—indeed was crowded with more than he could conveniently accommodate. But Mac—was not inclined to hear objections, or to make difficulties. In the *George and Bridget* he must go! The ship was sufficiently large, and he was disposed to accept whatever accommodations he might find.

From his frankness of manner, and the willingness he expressed to put up with all the inconveniences that might present themselves, as well as from his companionable familiarity, the master of the ship became interested in his behalf, and adopted him as his prime associate. Soon he was the companion and friend, and none were so happy as *Doctor* and *Captain*; for in a few hours they were the acquaintances of years; and Mac— was so entirely *chez lui*, that he seemed rather to be the master's intimate friend, than a passenger. He now was happy—forgot all past cares and toils, looked forward to a quick passage, and the delight of a clean shirt on his arrival. Yet were his troubles not at an end, for on the accident



occurring of another ship running foul of the George and Bridget, the timid nature of poor Mac—represented to his imagination a thousand terrors, and, in the hurried impulse of vivid apprehension, cruelly augmented the alarm: in all the dread of sinking to the bottom, he accused his luckless stars, called the fates relentless, uttered loud ejaculations for his safety, and called that moment only, unhappy, which had led him to the George and Bridget. But the ship afterwards made a short and favorable passage, and is arrived in safety at Barbadoes—where poor Mac—yet lives to relate all his perils by sea, and his troubles on shore\*.

\* The George and Bridget afterwards sunk in the harbour of Cape St. Nicholas Mole: and poor unfortunate Mac—soon after his arrival at St. Domingo fell a victim to the yellow fever.

## LETTER III.

*A Common signal of alarm converted into an ensign of joy. Acuteness of sailors in discovering the nature and extent of a fleet at sea. Convoy from Cork arrives on the 1st of April. Its entrance into Carlisle bay an interesting scene. Author and his comrades expect to proceed to St. Domingo. Voyage thither from Barbadoes only a pleasant run down the trades.*

Barbadoes, April 1.

ACCUSTOMED to address you upon all occasions without reserve, my glad pen, true to the feelings that direct it, seems conscious when made the herald of happy tidings, and, on such occasions, certain of being hailed with all the warmth of sympathy, it hastens to greet you with a swiftness even beyond its feathered self.

We are here all joy and gladness. Without the humour of an April day, the morning has been bright and cheerful, from bringing to us friends we have long been anxious to meet.

I have before observed to you, that the alarm signal being hoisted at the fort, indicates

a strange fleet in sight. When it appears every one is on the alert, and ready to take his post, and thus the signal serves to prevent surprise. But, one idea so predominates among our party, and we have been so long absorbed in one great expectation, that the signal of alarm is become a signal of joy, and, with the report of a strange fleet, we instantly associate the arrival of our long expected convoy.

Early this morning the ensign of alarm was flying at the battery, but apprehension was not even the momentary effect; no sooner did the eye convey the intelligence to the mind, than the heart bounded with gladness, and we assured ourselves of the remainder of our Portsmouth convoy. In this belief we were also sanctioned by the late arrival of the *Rose* E. Indiaman and the *Columbus*, both of which had sailed from Spithead with Admiral Cornwallis, and likewise by the arrival of *La Favorite*, a fast sailing French vessel of 20 guns, which had been captured by the fleet on its passage, and sent in under command of one of our officers—Still our ready conjectures did not convey the fact, for as the unnumbered strangers approached, it was discovered that



they were neither foes, nor Portsmouth friends.

On this occasion, as on many others, we were both pleased and surprised to observe the acuteness of our men of the ocean in discovering the nature and extent of a distant fleet, at sea. Before *we* could well distinguish a ship from a brig, our tars, from the cut of the sails, proclaimed it an English convoy, but not that of Admiral Cornwallis. From the mode of setting the canvases, from the form of the ship, the figure of the masts, or some slight circumstance, attaching to different vessels, but totally imperceptible to us, they had no hesitation in declaring, while yet at a great distance, that instead of the fleet from Spithead, it was our long-wished for convoy from Cork.

To us this was even better and still more joyful news, and we had soon the gratification of finding it correct. The whole fleet is now at anchor in the bay, and has brought to us a large body of troops, destined for St. Domingo, under the command of General Whyte. This being peculiarly our division of the expedition, we had twofold pleasure in greeting its arrival.

In our gladness to hail it, we climbed the shrouds up to the main top—and there stood to view its entrance into the bay.

Such a scene must have been highly interesting, even had it been wholly independent of the intimate connection we had with it : the day was fine—the breeze soft and mild, and the surface of the water gently moving. The picture was rich and varied : comprehending, under a bird's-eye-view, the town, and neighbouring plantations—the bay crowded with shipping—a great extent of the fine country around—and the wide ocean, together with the numerous vessels of our desired convoy dropping with full sails into the harbour.

You will believe that it was one of the most pleasing prospects we had beheld since our departure from England. While it seems to secure the speedy removal of our long and anxious suspense, it strongly revives the hope of a successful campaign.

This fleet, which had been so often reported at sea, even so long since as before we left England, and which did once sail and return to har-

bour, finally took its departure from Cove on the 25th of February: hence it may, at last, be considered to have made a very favorable passage, having been precisely five weeks at sea.

We now look forward to a speedy change of place, and I may soon have to address you from St. Domingo, where I hope to meet your letters, and learn tidings of ye all. It is about a week's voyage, and is considered a very pleasant one—being as fine sailing as is known on any part of the ocean; the ship having only to spread wide her wings and fly before the trades.



## LETTER IV.

*Creole languor from heat of climate—favorable to the Brunonian doctrine. Effect of climate upon a Dutch sailor. Lord Sheffield hailed by a man in the sea. An intoxicated sailor overawed by the presence of a superior.*

Barbadoes, April.

INDOLENCE is considered to be the general effect of excessive heat of climate ; and had the great Bruno visited the tropical regions, he might here have found many facts in support of his plausible and very ingenious doctrine. The languor of climate is felt by few on their early arrival in the West Indies. The first effect of the heat seems to be that of stimulating the rigid northern fibre into increased activity—and Creole inertness follows only as the result of continued residence.

“ Precisely thus,” would have exclaimed the ingenious Bruno, “ and so with wine, opium, beloved brandy, and all other stimuli. They, at first, only increase the excitement, and give new vigour to the frame ; but, con-

tinued to excess, they exhaust the excitability—over-run ever delighting excitement, and plunge the body into indirect debility, inducing a state of body, precisely similar to that of Creole inactivity—a state from which there is no escape, but through the medium of new or still more powerful stimuli.” Yet, the renewed vigour—the restored excitement, acquired by a return to the sedative north, would seem an everlasting obstacle to the theory as stated by its great projector—the languor of climate, or indirect debility, being removed by a directly debilitating power—the abstraction of heat.

But I am straying from our path. Let me, therefore, retrace my steps, and tell you the effect of climate upon a cold Hollander of our crew.

I have already made known to you that neither my comrade Cleghorn, nor myself, yet feel any sense of tropical indolence, but continue our habits of exercise in all our rude European strength. We have, for some days past, been closely watching one of our sailors—a Dutchman. He is recently from Hol-

land, and, in manners and appearance, *un vrai Batave*. On the passage he was a dull, heavy, slow, and plodding Dutchman—frigid, and inanimate as the most icy boor of his aquatic nation. His movements were a pretty accurate representation of the crawling sloth, and the unvaried sedateness of his visage no less emblematical of his native home.

Having particularly noticed him throughout the voyage, we feel some surprize in now witnessing, as it were, a complete revolution of his nature and habits. The rays of a tropical sun seem to have given play to his muscles, set free all the circulating juices of his frame, and unfrozen the icy coldness of his soul. The change we observe in him is indeed greater than you can imagine: roused from the torpor of unheeding sameness, by the all-vivifying power of tropical warmth, the cold cloud of indifference is dissipated from his brow—and the Batavian gluten of his frame sublimed into volatile spirits. He is grown cheerful and gay; wears a smile of mirth upon his countenance, and moves with an agility and alertness, beyond all that could have been hoped in a Dutchman. He now skips merrily



about the ship ; pulls his oar with glee in the boat ; and, on all occasions, appears animated and lively ; vying in spirits and activity with the sprightliest tar of the ship.

I have next to conduct you into the presence of a true English sailor ; but first let me ask you, as one versed in the operations of the human mind, in what way the appearance of a superior, before the eye of a drunken man, produces the effect of instantly subduing all the violence of wrath and revenge ?

Early this morning our ship was hailed in the loud rough voice of a sailor, who, from the sound, appeared to be near to us, but no boat was seen to be alongside, nor could we discover whence the voice proceeded ; still it was repeated again and again, and at length, on looking over the quarter boards, we perceived a naked head in the sea. A rope was instantly thrown over, and the man, eagerly seizing it, quickly climbed on board. It was a sailor from one of the neighbouring ships, who was much intoxicated, and had thrown himself into the sea, in order to escape from the vessel, on account of a quarrel with the

boatswain and mate, who, according to his account, had treated him very ill. He was bitterly incensed, and in all the heat of rage protested, violently, against the captain, the mate, the boatswain, and in short the very ship, swearing that no earthly power should ever oblige him to return to it, and entreating to be employed on board the Lord Sheffield. But finding him to be excessively intoxicated, we hailed the master of the ship and informed him where to find his sailor. He, accordingly, came without delay to fetch him, and we were surprized to remark, that the very instant he stepped on board, and the man's eye met him, all his inebriate violence, as if by magic, was subdued, and at once converted into temperate submission and obedience. Simply the face of his commander in a moment extinguished the furious flames of wrath, checked the burning current of revenge, and destroyed all sense of an injury which had been powerful enough to impel him to the hazard of throwing himself into the sea ;—all his loud execrations ceased, he became docile and respectful, and returned to his ship without a murmur ?—How true it is, my friend, that the passions of men may be brought under

control, and how lamentable that they are so commonly left to reign in lawless sway ! How often do we see that, like our drunken sailor, those intoxicated with boisterous rage, however loud and violent before their intimates, can command themselves into a milder manner, when overawed by the presence of strangers, or of their superiors.



## LETTER V.

*A surgical operation performed with great dexterity by a negro. Progress of chigoes in the foot. Negroes expert in finding them. Mode of extracting them. Indolent toil of slaves. Inconvenient method of labour. Severity used towards a party of slaves. Brigands defeated at Grenada. Officers lost of the name of Edwards. Single ships continue to arrive in Carlisle bay. Reports respecting the St. Domingo division. Sir John La Forey arrives at Barbadoes.*

Barbadoes, April.

PERHAPS you will feel somewhat surprized should I tell you that we have seen an African slave perform a chirurgical operation, with greater dexterity than it could have been done by the most skilful surgeon of Europe !

Walking on the beach, we remarked two negroes sitting on the sands, occupied with something, which seemed to command minute attention ; and on approaching near to them, we found the one engaged in extracting that sadly troublesome insect the Chigoe, from the other's foot. Our curiosity being excited, we stopped to witness the operation, and saw it executed with great neatness and dexterity.

The chigoe is a very minute insect, which insinuates itself, imperceptibly, under the skin, most commonly of the toes, and there, forming a nidus, produces its young. These are enveloped in a small cyst or bag, which usually increases to the size of a pea, as the period of maturity approaches. When the young are to escape, a sense of tingling, or itching is felt in the part—at first very slight, often, indeed, not sufficient to attract the notice of Europeans—but, if longer neglected, increases to a sense of foreness on pressure, or on treading upon that part of the foot. This commonly leads to examination, when a black, or dark point is discovered, which directs to a small, and scarcely tumid circle, whitish, or very slightly inflamed, of an appearance somewhat like what might arise from a pea lodged under the skin. If, at this period the cyst be removed, the disease is eradicated, and nothing further is to be apprehended; but if it be still further neglected, the nidus ruptures, and the young ones escaping penetrate into the parts around, producing a sore which degenerates into a troublesome ulcer, and this being increased by the new cysts of many chigoes, not unfrequently

proceeds to incurable disease, and ultimately to the destruction of the toe.

The chigoe prevails most in sandy places. In this island they are very numerous. A negro not unfrequently extracts five or six from his feet, at one sitting; and so expert are they at finding them, that, in examining the foot of an European, a slave will, frequently, discover two or three chigoes, before the master had felt the least sense of itching or uneasiness from them.

The mode of extracting them is as follows: with a pointed pen-knife, not very sharp, or the blunt end of a large needle, a slight opening is broken in the skin, at the small black point over the cyst. From this opening the skin is forced away, by being torn, or broken down, and pressed outwards, on all sides, care being taken not to puncture, or otherwise rupture the cyst. The skin, being thus separated, the nidus or small bag becomes exposed in form of a little round body—and is, afterwards, extracted by pressing down the point of the instrument, at one side, and turn-



ing it out whole. A round hole remains not unlike a pea issue. This the negro commonly fills with ashes from the pipe or fagar, mixed with butter, tallow from a candle, or any other kind of greafe that happens to be at hand, and the cure is completed with the operation.

A specimen of indolence in labour has occurred to our observation, which, whether it be regarded as the effect of climate, or of slavery, I may note to you as an additional example of the feeble exertions used by slaves in their unrequited round of toil. A party of negroes being employed to remove some hospital stores, from the side of the water to a warehouse, Dr. Cleghorn and myself took the opportunity of passing that way in our walk, in order to see them at work, and to remark upon their industry and mode of labour.—We found no less than ten slaves occupied in rolling a middle-sized chest, with a black driver holding his whip at their backs, and an overseer, of fairer skin, to command them. It was perhaps, in all respects, the very worst way in which such a package could have been moved! From the size of the

chest it was only with difficulty each negro could find space for an assisting hand ; from its shape it was most inconvenient for rolling ; and, from its contents, most improper—being filled with bottles, jars, earthen pots, and the like. In England four men would have carried it upon a hand-barrow with great ease—while, here, the time and labour of twelve men were consumed in moving it, at a rate incomparably slower, and at the expence, probably, of great part of its contents.

We pointed out to them the injury that might, and the loss of time that necessarily must derive from this method of moving it, and endeavored to convince them how much better, safer, and more expeditious it would be, to take it up, and carry it. But, no ! That was not their way ! “ *We no savez carry him, we roll him gently, Massa, den we no break 'em bottles inside,*” was the reply. In even the most liberal it is always a task to oppose habits confirmed by long usage—among slaves it were utterly in vain to attempt it ! Had we insisted upon the case being carried, it is more than probable that it had

quickly fallen to the ground, and the whole contents been shattered to atoms ; we, therefore, left them to pursue their own means.

We have since met with another circumstance nearly similar, which I might offer to you as a further example of the indolent manner in which slaves execute their task : or I might note it as a specimen of the cruelties which men, held in slavery, may, and too frequently do become subject to, from passionate, and unfeeling individuals. Walking towards the hospital we met a party of negroes rolling a box of stores from the boat, in which they had been brought on shore, to the store-room. Perceiving the case to be light, and knowing it to contain only vessels of tin, a desire to see how they would perform led us to try the experiment of making them carry it : nor in doing this were we aware of exposing any of them to an act of cruelty, or, we had assuredly left them, as before, to their own way.—On attempting to lift the package to their shoulders, they set about it precisely in the awkward and ludicrous manner we had expected ; still as no



accident, nor injury of consequence could derive from it, we, who were recently from Europe, were quite diverted at their fruitless and incompetent efforts ; but Captain ——, who was with us, and had resided long enough in the West Indies to have accustomed himself to the arbitrary treatment of slaves, seeing the stupid way in which they attempted this new task, immediately gave one of the poor fellows a cruel cut, with a large horse whip, across the face and eyes ! We remonstrated with him on this unnecessary and unmerited severity ; and could not but mark it, in our minds, as an act of wanton cruelty ; which, if I may judge from the impulse of my own feelings, will long stand against him. We desired the poor negroes to put down the box, and convey it according to their own method ; and, in sentiments of indignation, left the Captain to the remorse which ought to be his punishment.

You will be pleased to know that intelligence has just reached us of the defeat of the brigands at Grenada, in an action with our troops, commanded by general Nicoll. Their loss is said to amount to three hundred men.

It is with grief we learn that several of our brave countrymen have also fallen; among whom we lament to find Major Edwards, whose very name would seem at this moment to be unfortunate, for Major Edwards of the artillery has also just taken a fatal leave of his comrades, in consequence of (perhaps imprudent) exposure to climate; and a Lieutenant Edwards, only a few days since, fell a victim to typhus fever contracted on the passage.

The Portsmouth fleet is still a truant to our expectations. From the tidings we had received of it we now think it long delayed; and unhappy conjectures, respecting it, again prevail. Four additional ships of this convoy arrived some days since, and from these we felt assured of learning that the Admiral and the remainder of the fleet were near the island; but we were disappointed on finding that they parted from the convoy the first or second night after leaving Spithead; since which they have neither seen nor heard any thing of it. No accurate intelligence having reached us, since the time our expectations had led us to look for its arrival, we have

many fears lest Admiral Cornwallis may have sailed into Admiral Christian's unfortunate path; and, like him, been obliged to trace his course back into an English port.

You will feel no surprise on knowing that many rumours have already obtained circulation, all equally uncertain, and, perhaps, equally unfounded, regarding the further movements of the St. Domingo division. Some insist that we are to go immediately; others that we are to wait the arrival of Admiral Cornwallis; and many that we are not to go at all. At one moment the whole of us are to sail without delay: next we hear that only the cavalry is to go: then it is said that the barrack ships, and a detachment of the hospital staff, only, are to proceed: and, again, we hear it whispered by some one, believing himself to be quite in the secret, that the horse ships, the store ships, and the whole of the hospital department are to go down to St. Domingo, and the principal body of the Cork division to remain, and assist in the grand objects of the expedition to windward! Amidst such incertitude I can, only, say as usual—continue to write to me at St. Domingo.



Sir John La Forey is arrived here in the *Majestic*, from Martinique. This officer, who, for some time past, has had the command of the navy upon this station, and is much respected in the colonies, we are told is to be relieved, and to return to England on the arrival of Admiral Cornwallis, or Admiral Christian.

## LETTER VI.

*General Remarks concerning Barbadoes. Different appearance of the West India Islands, and the opposite coast. Situation and extent of Barbadoes. Period of settlement. General face of the Island.—Called aged and decrepit. Inhabitants proud of its antiquity. Early commerce and population of Barbadoes. Its decline from its former prosperity. Middle class of Inhabitants. Temperature and salubrity of the atmosphere. Exemption from important ills. Endemial malady. Carlisle bay. Whence so named. Towns, houses, huts, cottages and other buildings. Varied and interesting scenery. Hospitality of the Inhabitants. Remarks concerning the distinctive appellation of the two divisions of the armament. Difficulty of ascertaining which the windward, and which the leeward islands according to the common acceptance. Soil of Barbadoes. Remarks on tillage and cultivation. Small cattle kept for the purpose of supplying manure. Wet and dry seasons. Sea and land breeze. Equal length of the days. Absence of twilight. Perpetual summer compared with the delighting novelty of an English Spring. Remarks upon Spring. An English scene in the month of May.*

Barbadoes, April 7.

HAVING from time to time detailed to you, in all of desultory remark, the whole

chain of circumstances that have passed under my eye, you will not perhaps deem it premature, should I now offer you a few general observations concerning the island of Barbadoes. After a residence of many weeks it is probable that my notes may possess more of correctness than any I might have offered you immediately on my arrival. I feel, also, that you may find them somewhat more interesting after the irregular melange that has preceded them. I therefore purpose taking up my pen, from day to day, at each moment of leisure, until I shall have copied for you the few remarks I have collected on the general subject of Barbadoes, and may probably send them to you, in a full packet, by some early occasion.

From the situation of the West India Islands in the Atlantic ocean, extending in form of a semicircle, nearly from the coast of Florida to the river Oronoko, it might seem that, at some remote period, they had been detached from the great continent of America, either by the gradual and progressive power of the ocean, or by some great and



sudden convulsion of nature. But from their being of very irregular and mountainous surface, while the land of the proximate shore is peculiarly low and flat, to a distance of many miles from the coast, it would appear that the islands and the main land owned a distinct, and very different origin. The craggy shores, and rugged broken figure of the islands bespeak the convulsive throes of a sudden birth; while the smooth and muddy surface of the opposite coast indicates a less disturbed and slower beginning. Probably the latter has been formed from the gradual deposit of a feculent ocean—the former from the vehement vomitings of volcanic eruption.

Barbadoes is the most windward of the West India Islands; and is in that division of them known by the appellation of Charibbee Islands—a name they have obtained from one of the nations of Indians, who formerly inhabited them.

It is about twenty-one miles in length, by fourteen in breadth; lying in latitude  $13^{\circ}$  North, longitude  $59^{\circ}$ . West. The English

have occupied it nearly two centuries, having taken possession of it in the reign of James I. At the time of being settled by our countrymen, it was covered with wood, and had no appearance of having been, before, occupied by man; but it now appears under a very different aspect,—the destructive axe having converted its deep and heavy forests into even characteristic nakedness.

West Indians regard it as of low and level surface: but this can be only comparatively speaking, and in reference to the neighbouring islands whose bold summits pierce the skies: for Barbadoes has all the pleasant variety afforded by hills and broken land, and, in some parts, is even mountainous, though less so than Grenada, St. Vincent, or St. Lucie.

It is considered as an old island, and, from having been long in cultivation, is said to be much exhausted, and wearing to decay. Those concerned in the culture of more recent, and now more prolific colonies, seem to compassionate Barbadoes as the venerable and decrepit parent of the race; while its inhabitants pride themselves upon its antiquity,

and, like the feudal lords of still more ancient states, assume a consequence, I might almost say claim hereditary rank and privilege from priority of establishment. This sense of distinction is strongly manifested in the sentiment conveyed by the vulgar expression so common in the island—"neither Charib, nor Creole, but true Barbadian," and which is participated even by the slaves, who proudly arrogate a superiority above the negroes of the other islands! Ask one of them if he was imported, or is a Creole, and he immediately replies—" *Me neder Chrab, nor Creole, Massa!* — *me troo Barbadian born.*"

Perhaps the late decline of this island may be still less the effect of exhaustion of the soil, than of the extensive emigration, and the diversion of commerce consequent on the cultivation of new islands and colonies. In the early period of its culture Barbadoes yielded a produce, and gave rise to an extent of commerce, not known in any other island, and its population increased to a degree, perhaps unprecedented in any part of the globe. Within the first fifty years the trade of the island had become sufficient to employ four hundred



fail of shipping ; and the number of inhabitants amounted to no less than one hundred and fifty thousand, being upwards of five hundred to every square mile.

To enable the land to continue the bountiful produce it now afforded required much labour, and a great and expensive supply of manure, therefore as new colonies were settled, and new land brought into cultivation, which was capable of yielding equal returns with less labour, and less of artificial supply, it became an object to individuals to emigrate from the neighbouring island of Barbadoes, and engage in the culture of the more recent, and less exhausted settlements ; and, thus, with the population, the commerce, which before had been confined to the parent island, was necessarily diverted into new and various channels.

At this day the Dutch colonies of Guiana, and the captured island of Martinique are a continual drain upon the population of Barbadoes. But notwithstanding its decline from what it once was, it is still the most populous, and one of the most important of our

West India possessions. From situation, and from its fine bay for shipping, even independent of its produce, it must ever be valuable to us, and indeed may be considered as the key of the West Indies. Some of the Creoles of the island, not barely sensible of this, commit the excess of attaching to it a degree of importance beyond even England itself.—“*What would poor old England do,*” say they, “*were Barbadoes to forsake her?*” This adage you will believe expresses only the veneration of the illiterate; but you will admit that it arises from a very natural feeling: for those who have seen but one spot readily fancy that to be of the first importance! And there are multitudes in Barbadoes who never saw any other soil, and who, no doubt, from the same laudable sentiment which we so honor in Britons, regard their native isle as pre-eminent above all others.

Barbadoes contains a numerous class of inhabitants, between the great planters, and the people of colour, a circumstance which forms a striking difference between this island and the more recent colonies. Of these, many are descended from the original settlers, and have

no precise knowledge of the period when their ancestors first arrived. Through several generations they have been born, and have constantly lived upon the island. They regard it as their native, and only abode, and do not, like their more wealthy neighbours, look to England as another and a better home. Of some of these old families I may, perhaps, speak more particularly in another letter.

If in point of produce Barbadoes now yields to other settlements—if its population and commerce have decreased—if its thick woods have fallen before the rueful axe—and if its mountains are less aspiring than the towering summits of some of the neighbouring islands; still its trade and produce continue to be important; its population great; and the picturesque scenery of its surface, perhaps, unrivalled. Nor are these its only advantages; for, in consequence of being more cleared, and more generally cultivated, than the other islands, its temperature is more equable, and its air more salubrious. Damp woods do not interrupt, nor stagnant morasses empoison the breeze. Every part is exposed to the full perfusion of the trade-wind; by the



coolness and falubrity of which, this is rendered the most healthful of the islands ; inso-much that it is common, in sickness, to make a voyage from the other colonies to Barbadoes, as the Montpelier of the West Indies. Being situated to windward of the other islands, it receives the uninterrupted breeze, brought to it in all its purity immediately from a wide extent of ocean, unimpregnated by the septic exhalations of stagnant waters, or polluted soils.—Its temperature has been far less inconvenient than we had expected. We have felt but little oppression from heat ; and have continued our habits of exercise without interruption. In the harbour, and placed in the shade, the thermometer has seldom been higher than 84, and at no time has exceeded 86 degrees.

Yet blessed as the island is in its exemption from excessive heat, from noxious miasmata, and from great and general sickness, it has its peculiar ills ; being visited with an endemial affliction, so much its own as to have obtained the appellation of *the Barbadoes disease*. It appears in form of the elephantiasis, or what is here termed the “glandular

disease,"—and is a most unsightly and distressful malady.

Bridge-town is the capital of the island, and is situated on the S. W. Bank of Carlisle bay, which is one of the finest harbours, for shipping, in the West Indies; but is not considered to be secure during the hurricane season. It derives its name from the circumstance of a royal grant of the island having formerly been made to the Earl of Carlisle. The other towns are Speights-town, Austintown, and Hole-town, all of which are much inferior to Bridge-town.

Both the scenery and the population of the island are more indebted to the number and variety of mansions, cottages, and huts, thickly spotted over its surface, than to its towns; which, as is too commonly the case in all countries, are built with less regard to general appearance, and the health of the inhabitants, than to the convenience of trade, and the profit of individuals.

On all quarters of the island are seen numbers of wind-mills, store-houses, and other

buildings for sugar, coffee, and cotton, houses of planters, the smaller dwellings of cottagers, and the huts of negroes, all of which improve the scenery, while they convey the idea of extensive population, and delight the mind with images of rural enjoyment, and of generally diffused comfort and tranquillity. The numerous buildings, together with their protecting shades about them—the luxuriant tropical vegetation—the constant verdure of the fields—the evergreen foliage of the trees—the broken irregular hills, lofty mountains, and cultivated rich-yielding plains—all surrounded with extensive views of shipping, and the open sea, create an effect more varied and interesting than is often to be met with, and contribute to render Barbadoes a most pleasant and picturesque island: and from this, added to the examples I have given you of the hospitality, and friendly urbanity of its inhabitants, you will discover how highly it is calculated to call forth the attention, interest the feelings, and secure the attachment of those who visit it.

In speaking to you of the situation of Barbadoes, it occurs to me to notice the confu-



tion which has arisen in the minds of individuals, from the term commonly employed to distinguish the two grand divisions of our expedition. To discriminate what is literally the *windward* army from that intended for St. Domingo, we hear it denominated the "*Lee-ward-Island*" division, than which it had been difficult to have found a term more pointedly incorrect. If the distinction be intended with regard to the course of the trade wind, it should have been directly the reverse, for the islands, occupied by the troops of what is called the "*Lee-ward-Island*" armament, happen with respect to St. Domingo to be every one very far to *windward* ! If the term regard only the common nautical division of the Charibbee islands themselves, it is still inappropriate, for the windward, no less than the leeward of these islands, are possessed by what is termed the *leeward* army.

Any person consulting a map of the West Indies must discover St. Domingo to be among the most leeward of the islands, and would necessarily be led to conclude that the *Lee-ward-Island* division, was the St. Domingo division, *i. e.* that they were synonymous, for

no one could imagine that the troops occupying Barbadoes, and the more immediately neighbouring islands, could belong to an army designated "*Leeward*," in contradistinction to the army of St. Domingo. Perhaps the terms Charibbee Island division, and St. Domingo division had been more accurate.

Led by this circumstance we have taken some pains to inform ourselves, which are the islands known under the term "*Leeward*," according to the common acceptation : but we find this to be a question of difficult solution ; almost every one dividing them differently ! Scarcely any two persons, from whom we have sought intelligence, have given the same reply ; nor does it seem to be accurately known where the line should be drawn. Some regard the distinction as respecting only the direction of the trade wind : some derive it from the course taken by the ships from Spain to Carthagena ; and others, from various other sources and circumstances ; yet all agree that Barbadoes is the most to windward ; and all allow that the Charibbee islands are less to leeward than St. Domingo.

But to return to my notes concerning Barbadoes ! I have before remarked to you the principal variations of its soil :—near Bridgetown it is of rich black earth, mostly spread on a base of calcareous rock, formed of madripores, and other marine concretions : in some districts it is of a red earth, of greater depth, but less rich : in others the soil is of a light whitish earth, broken into a grey-looking mould, or hardened into lumps resembling chalk—but actually consisting of indurated argille, bleached by exposure to the weather.

From this variety in the soil, together with that which attaches to situation, as being flat, or mountainous,—protected, or exposed, it will necessarily happen, that the produce will differ in different parts of the island : and as the whole has been long under cultivation, it is manifest that if a supply of manure, proportionate to the crops obtained, cannot be procured, a degree of exhaustion, bearing a certain ratio to the deficiency, must result.

It is established, from the mode of agriculture adopted in some counties of England, that, by an adequate supply of manure, land



may be continued in a constant round of cultivation, yielding as prolific crops as upon its earliest culture ; and this is now found to be no less certain, than that if the land be subjected to continued tillage, without such supply, it will be so exhausted, in the course of a few years, as not to give sufficient produce to compensate the labour and expence of cultivation.

The same facts equally apply to Barbadoes, where, if the artificial supply be not commensurate with the produce removed from the land, a gradual diminution of the crops will succeed, or, in order to have these in their usual abundance, the acres in cultivation must be reduced to such a number as the island shall be capable of furnishing with an adequate quantity of manure ; and we accordingly find that great herds of a small species of cattle, mostly steers, are kept upon the plantations, for the purpose of supplying this indispensable addition to the soil. These are employed instead of horses in the heavy labour of the estate, and we often see from twelve to twenty-four of them yoked in a waggon, drawing a single hoghead of sugar, or some other small load, such as in

London would be conveyed with facility by two horses in a cart.

At night the cattle are penned upon a bed of trash, collected from the refuse of the canes and other waste materials of the estate, by treading upon which, and mixing it with their own dung, they trample the whole into an useful compost for the fields.

It necessarily follows from such numbers of these cattle being required, for the purpose of manuring the land, that a greater supply of beef and veal is raised for the markets, and that fresh provisions are more plentiful than in most of the other colonies. Of the custom of buying the veal in live quarters for the pot I have already spoken—and I may now remark that the beef is too commonly killed very young—forming neither beef nor veal, but a something of flavor and appearance between the two.

The seasons here are not divided into winter and summer, but into wet and dry: yet are they, by no means, what many from these terms would believe, who might imagine

that half the year is drowned with incessant rain, and the other half parched with constant drought. Such a construction of the terms *wet* season, and *dry* season, though not unfrequent, is far from correct, and leads to a very inaccurate idea of the climate ; for, although it has been the dry season, during the whole time we have been at Barbadoes, we have scarcely had two successive days without refreshing rain : although the showers are not so heavy at this period as at that of their greater frequency, termed the wet season, when the torrent which falls might often convey the idea of a sudden rupture of the clouds, letting forth their waters *in streams* to the earth.

The quick evaporation which succeeds to rain in these climates creates a most agreeable and refreshing coolness. The extreme ardor of the sun's rays is also counteracted by the ever-grateful breeze, which sets in from the sea about eight or nine o'clock in the morning, and continues throughout the day, ceasing only as the sun forsakes us at evening ; when we are again defended from oppressive languor by a breeze springing up from the land. This sets in as the sea-breeze subsides, and di-



verging, as it were from a central point, is felt on all quarters of the island.

Without these beneficent provisions of nature no tropical climate could have been habitable: nor does that great parent in any thing more admirably display her guardian care, nor more strikingly exhibit the universal consistency, or the happy order and arrangement of her works. The intense heat between the tropics must have been destructive to animal life, had not an antidote been offered in the refreshing trades; which, forming the suite of a burning sun, moderate the effects of his too effulgent rays.

The day is nearly of equal length throughout the whole circle of the year. We have none of the short dark days of an English winter, nor of the still shorter light nights of a Scottish summer. Nights of one or two hours, and days of six or seven are here equally unknown: until nearly the hour of six fair Aurora opens not her gates to spread around her eastern beams, and solemn Vesper, with little variation throughout the year, closes the spangled brightness of the west

about the hour of seven. Evening is scarcely known. The sun traversing his vertical course sinks at once from the horizon, and, refusing his oblique beams to protract or soften the decline of day, robs us of the gentle crepuscule hour, and suddenly throws around all the obscurity of night.

This uniformity of the diurnal round scarcely exceeds that of the general temperature of the climate, which brings us one perpetual summer. The fields and the trees are always green. Live nature ever smiles. Uninterrupted by the torpor of winter she is neither chilled with frost, nor buried in snow. But, for these advantages, we forego the sprightly delight, and genial comfort of a summer's evening, the all-animating pleasures of a returning spring, and the soft and placid joys of gentle twilight's hour. Had I time for such discussions, I might here enter into a long digression upon the comparative excellence of the climate we have left, and that we now inhabit: yet should I yield the palm to my native island, for of all the delights of climate in other countries, however great or durable, I know none that can stand in competition

with the sweet and animated softness of England's spring.

Of this soul-enchanting season the effect, no doubt, is much heightened by its periodical return ; and from its succeeding to the chilling blasts, and all the long and dreary suspension occasioned by winter. It is in fact the resuscitation of nature, and is calculated universally to enliven,—while it forms the high repast of feeling and contemplative minds.

What combination—what scenery can man contemplate capable of affording the tender delight felt in a solitary ramble, across the rich and neat enclosures of England, at the happy period, when nature, reanimated by the genial orb of May, displays, in gentle mildness, all her loveliest form, and regales every sense with her softest banquets ! Perhaps no scene is known so sweetly grateful—none that so calms the bosom with soft feelings of peace and comfort, or that ministers such copious streams of genuine delight. All around unites in sweetest harmony. The eye, the olfactories, the ear, the very senses



of feeling, and of taste—all are gratified. The fields, spread with green-shooting herbage, appear enchantingly variegated with the cowslip, the yellow crocus, and the daisy. While the fleecy herd patiently crop the succulent plant, the young lambs are seen skipping, innocent and playful, at the sides of their dams. The hedges protrude the verdant bud and swelling blossom to dress their chilly nakedness, and the trees, casting off the dull coat of winter, assume the soft livery of the season. The fragrant odours of the apple blossom, the hawthorn, and the violet are exhaled around—the blackbird, the thrush, and the nightingale, warbling soft carols amidst the budding bushes, enchant the ear. The very organs of taste are regaled with freshness from the mild salubrious breeze; and to the whole frame a genial feeling is imparted by the fostering rays of a temperate and cheering sun.

In mental retrospect do I oft-times contemplate a scene which every Englishman of feeling must have frequently enjoyed. Taking him from the busy hum of the world, my fancy leads the lover of nature into the en-

closed fields of England, in one of the mild mornings of May, and seating him under a green-budding hedge, upon a mossy and sun-warmed bank, furrounded with violets, bids him look down the sloping mead to the crooked brook which winds in gentle current along the bottom, and there behold the thick wood of the opposite bank, reflecting the dark semblance of its branches in the stream, and bursting forth its protecting foliage to conceal the harmonic songsters of the season. It also directs his eye to the green carpet of shooting herbage, enriched with the tender cowslip and the humble daisy, and invites his regard to the playful innocence of the young lambkins skipping before him. To his ear it conveys grateful melody in the bleating of distant herds ; the lively whistling of contented hinds ; or the happy milk maid's simple song :— even the loud cawing of the rooks perched on the lofty elms, the soft note of the innocent robin hopping under the hedge, and the very chirpings of the merry sparrow excite congenial feelings, and improve the general harmony—while the bright sun, occasionally obscured by fleeting clouds, exhibits the varied interchanges of light and

shade, and gives a higher interest to all around. Having thus placed him, appealing fancy earnestly demands if any thing in the eternal summer of other regions can equal the soft delight—the genial harmony of soul and sentiment inspired by this tender vernal scene?

Some fair friends of ours would place at his side the mistress of his heart, and thus give perfection to his happiness, as Buffon perfects the existence of his infant of maturity. But excuse me, ye fair, should I hazard the suggestion whether to be left alone, to think and wish towards her, might in such a situation be less soul-delighting; for anticipation is said to sweeten our highest joys, and, perhaps, it were the very life and essence of such-like moments to feel the *tender privation* of having yet a something to wish, and to hope.

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*Regularity observed at Barbadoes in regard to rising and going to rest. Land and sea breeze. Diet and mode of serving the table. Planters and merchants sometimes grow fat: clerks, book-keepers, &c. very thin. Condiments much used. Plenty deemed a greater excellence than delicacy of assortment at a Barbadoes feast. A West India dinner. English habit of driving ladies from the dinner table practised also at Barbadoes. Bad arrangement of dinner parties. Attendants of the table numerous. Odour of the Negroes offensive. Stock and provisions abundant at Barbadoes. Personal clothing of the inhabitants—Bed clothing. Languid pronunciation of Barbadoes Creoles. Concerning the state of the slaves. Old and decrepit Negroes allowed to beg, and to lie about the streets. First example of slaves seen by the author and his comrades. The Negroes of the poorer owners distinguished from those of the more opulent. Clothing of slaves. Construction of their dwellings. Negroes chilly, and hover round a fire in the evening;—are fond of smoking tobacco. Food issued to the slaves. Pepper pot. Hours of toil. Deficiency of moral principle among slaves.*

April 8.

**T**HE uniform returns of day and night in this climate appear to induce a regularity of habit in the hours of rising, and going to rest. It is common to leave the pillow at six in the morning, and few persons remain out of bed after eleven at night. The coolest

and most pleasant part of the day is from six to about half-past seven o'clock in the morning: about eight an oppressive closeness is often experienced, arising from the decline of the land breeze, before that from the sea has become sufficiently strong to diffuse its influence. A similar period, likewise, occurs at evening, between the abatement of the sea breeze and the setting in of the breeze from the land. Some days the closeness of these hours is so slight, as to be scarcely perceptible, but commonly they are by far the most oppressive of the twenty-four.

Respecting the mode of living it may be remarked that in all countries said to be civilized, and among all people calling themselves cultivated, too much of time and attention are devoted to the business of eating and drinking. Perhaps the majority of diseases in social life may be traced to this source. Were it possible to convey, in a single sentence, the frightful train of ills, the melancholy interruptions of health, and the immense consumption of time, thus produced, men would be shocked to read it! They would be terrified to behold

the magnitude of an abuse, to which, unheeding, they had so long been devoted. This remark but too correctly applies to the island from whence I am addressing you, and where, from the degree of indolence induced by tropical heat, the ingesta taken to excess may be expected in a peculiar degree to oppress the human frame.

The people of Barbadoes are much addicted to the pleasures of the table. We have sometimes thought that, in eating, they might put to the blush even the turtle countenances of our London fat citizens.

The breakfast usually consists of tea and coffee, or chocolate, with eggs, ham, tongue, or other cold meat. Bread is seldom used, but substitutes are found in roasted yams or eddoes, both of which a good deal resemble roasted potatoes. They are used hot, and eaten with butter, which is sometimes made in the country, but more frequently barrelled and brought from Ireland; that made in the island being of cream-like softness, and not always of good flavor. In the course of the forenoon are used fruits, or sandwiches, with



free libations of punch and sangaree. Immediately preceding dinner, which is usually at an early hour, are taken punch and mandram. The dinner, for the most part, is profuse, and many hours are commonly passed at table in full and busy occupation.

After a more than plentiful consumption of food, a free indulgence in fruit, and a bounteous supply of wine and other good liquors, to crown the repast, the appetite and thirst are further provoked by a dish of sprats, or other broiled fish, and a large bowl of milk punch. Tea and coffee are next served—and lastly comes the supper, which forms no trifling meal. After this the bottle, the glass, and the punch-bowl know no rest, until the silent hour when Morpheus, with rival powers, dethrones the Bacchanalian god.

From the nature of the climate we had expected to have found the inhabitants men of meager figure, half dissolved in perspiration, and exhausted almost to shadows: nor, indeed, are such figures rare, but they are to be found, mostly, among the clerks, the book-keepers, and those orders of white people below the

managers—those who are employed in active and busy occupation, and have but little time to devote to indolence and the luxuries of the table. Among the merchants and planters are many of as fat and portly figure as well-fed aldermen; to whom, indeed, they are scarcely second in Epicurean devotion.

We observe that condiments are used very generally, and in great quantity. Acting as stimulants they appear to have the effect of causing the relaxed and enfeebled stomach to receive and to digest more than it would, otherwise, require—more, indeed, than it would, otherwise, take. The various species of red pepper, known in England under the common term *Cayenne*, are used in quantities that would seem incredible to people of colder climates.

A mixture of food is often taken, of a nature scarcely less heterogeneous than is commonly consumed at the varied feast of a French appetite; and with this melange of solids, are used wine, punch, porter, cyder, noyeau, and other good liquors in free libation—yet are there specimens of health and

vigour, amidst all these indulgences, which might stagger the doctrines of the advocates of abstemiousness.

In the order of the feast plenty more prevails than elegance. The loaded board groans, nay almost sinks beneath the weight of hospitality. That delicacy of arrangement now studied in England, under the term *œconomy* of the table, is here deemed a less perfection than a substantial plenty. Liberality is more esteemed than delicacy in the supply; and solids are, sometimes, heaped upon the table in a crowded abundance that might make a London fine lady faint.

The repast not unfrequently consists of different kinds of fish—a variety of soups—a young kid—a whole lamb, or half a sheep—several dishes of beef, or mutton—a turkey—a large ham—guinea fowls—and a pigeon pie; with various kinds of puddings; a profusion of vegetables; and multitudes of sweets. I was lately one of a small party, where, precisely, this dinner was served, and where the half of a sheep, kicking its legs almost in the face of the master of the house, adorned the



bottom of the table—forming the most unseemly dish I ever beheld.

Perhaps we may find it to be common to the West Indies, but, hitherto, it has appeared to us peculiar to Barbadoes—to put on table three or four large substantial puddings of different kinds, and four or five dishes of the same sort of meat, differently dressed. Unaccustomed to this, an English eye, on looking into the dining room, is surprized at the continuation of mutton, mutton, mutton, pudding, pudding, pudding, from one end of the table to the other, and which the crowd of other good things seems to render unnecessary.

The generous board is often supplied wholly from the produce of the estate, and on the occasion of giving an entertainment it is not unusual to kill an ox, a sheep, or, literally, the fatted calf: hence it occurs that various dishes of the same kind of food, under different forms, sometimes make up the principal part of the dinner, and, thus, it becomes explained why we sometimes see upon table, at the same time, roasted mutton, mutton ragout,

boiled mutton, mutton chops, and a mutton pie. The puddings mostly used are of citron, coco-nut, yam, lemon, and custard, and do great credit to the Barbadoes cookery-book. The desert is not less plenteous than the dinner, consisting of a variety of fruits, and preserves, served in crowded supply. The bottle and glass pass freely, and the fluids are in full proportion to the solids of the feast.

The liquors most in use are Madeira and claret wines, punch, sangaree, porter, and cyder. Punch and sangaree are commonly taken as the *diluent*s of the morning. The latter forms a most delightful drink. A glass of it, taken when parching with thirst, from heat and fatigue, may be ranked among the highest gratifications of our nature! At such a moment, a draught of sangaree approaches nearer, perhaps, to god-like nectar, than any other known liquor. It consists of half Madeira wine and half water, acidulated with the fragrant lime, sweetened with sugar, and flavored with nutmeg. A stronger sort of it is sometimes drank under the superlative name of *sangrorum*. This differs from the former,

*is what is the sangaree  
punch?*

only in containing a greater proportion of wine.

The too prevalent English custom of *sending away* the ladies, or, according to the politer term, of the ladies *retiring* after dinner, for the gentlemen *to enjoy* their bottle, prevails also at Barbadoes; and, we have thought, even to a greater extreme than in England. They leave us very soon after dinner, and, often, we see no more of them during the evening. Frequently they do not, even, join us before dinner; but we find them all assembled, at the head of the table, when we enter the dining room; and, even there, we have little of their company, for the party is often so badly arranged, that we have scarcely more of the society of the ladies, and the people of the island, than if we had remained on board ship. Instead of the different persons being, pleasantly, intermixed, it is too common to see the ladies grouped together in a crowd at the upper end of the table—the officers and strangers, just arrived from Europe, placed at one side,—and the gentlemen of the island, who are mutual and familiar acquaintances, at the other side—implying that it is considered a



rule of politeness to place each person nearest to those with whom he is best acquainted. But this arrangement confines the conversation of each person, too much, to those with whom he is in the daily habit of associating. To me, it is always a disappointment, for I can converse with my comrades in my usual round, when strangers are not nigh ; but, when thrown into society, in a foreign country, I always feel a desire for the conversation of the people residing therein, expecting to obtain information from them, both of the country itself, and of the manners and customs of its inhabitants.

The attendants at the dinner table are very numerous. In addition to those of the family, almost every gentleman has his own slave ; and, thus, it often happens that the room is quite crowded with sable domestics, whose surfaces emit an odour not less savory than the richest dishes of the board. How long it may be before our olfactories become reconciled to this high-seasoning of a West India feast I cannot conjecture ; but, at present, we find it extremely offensive. Poor Master is particularly annoyed by it, and

always takes care to obtain a seat as much *to windward* as possible. Cleghorn and myself suffer no less from a most filthy custom of the negroes—of taking a plate from the side-board, before it is wanted, and standing with it under the arm, ready to give it the moment a change is required. On account of this dirty habit, we are obliged to attend with eagle watchfulness to avoid receiving as a clean one, a plate which a slave has been holding for some time closely pressed to, certainly, not the sweetest part of his naked skin.

In its supply of fresh provisions, particularly what is here termed *stock*, such as poultry and the like, Barbadoes exhibits a degree of plenty unknown in the neighbouring islands. This would seem to be the happy effect of allowing the slaves to raise poultry for sale; together with there being a number of small settlers, distributed about the country, who find their support chiefly in breeding stock for the markets. Poultry has been our principal food. Turkeys, guinea fowls, and chickens, we have had in great abundance. When we arrived, in the month of February, they were sold in the public market at little

more than a bit (about  $5\frac{1}{2}$ d.) per pound, but from the increased demand consequent upon the arrival of so many troops, and such crowds of shipping, the price is now raised to nearly double. The Moscovy ducks are also bred in great numbers upon the Island, and are so large as to appear like geese, when dressed for the table. Next to poultry they have veal and pork in the greatest plenty. In Bridge-town they have also a fish-market, which at times is well supplied, but not so regularly, as, from the insular situation of the country, might be expected.

Of the immense quantity of poultry raised on this little island, you will form some idea, when I tell you that not only the ships of war, and the transports, but most of the West India trading ships, recruit their stock at Barbadoes; and that in addition to this constant and extensive drain it furnishes occasional supplies to the other islands. Since we have been in Carlisle bay, we have seen, at various times, great quantities of stock shipped for the Island of Martinique.

In point of clothing the people of Barbadoes deviate less from the habits of England



than the difference of climate would seem to warrant. Their dress resembles that worn in our more northern latitude, being for the most part a cloth coat, with white cotton waistcoat, and nankeen pantaloons. In some instances people of very active employment, or those who are much exposed in the fields, have the whole suit made of nankeen. Their night clothing seems more appropriate to the greater heat of climate than the apparel of the day. It is common to sleep on a hard mattress in a long cotton shirt, without any other covering, except in the coolest season, when they make the slight addition of a simple cotton sheet.

One of the most prominent characteristics of the island is the tedious languor in which the people of Barbadoes pronounce their words. Nothing perhaps is more annoying to strangers. To convey to you, by the pen, any idea of their manner of speaking is utterly impossible:—to be comprehended, it must be heard. The languid syllables are drawled out as if it were a great fatigue to utter them; and the tortured ear of an European grows irritable and impatient in waiting for

the end of a word, or a sentence. “*How you do to da—ay,*” spoken by a Barbadian creole, consumes nearly as much time as might suffice for all the compliments of the morning ! nor is this wearisome pronunciation confined to the people of colour only. It occurs, likewise, among the whites, particularly those who have not visited Europe, or resided for some time away from the island. In the same lengthened accent do the lower orders of Barbadians, in unrestrained impetuous rage, pour forth volleys of uncommonly dreadful oaths, which, in their horrible combinations and epithets, form imprecations so strikingly impious, as to entitle them to the *merit* of peculiarity.

In manner, also, and in movement, as well as in speech, a degree of indolence and inaction prevails, beyond what might be expected, merely from heat of climate, and which has in it a something extremely annoying to Europeans.

The state of the negroes in Barbadoes varies, as the state of slaves must ever do, ac-

according to the disposition and circumstances of the master. Under such benevolent and humane characters as Mr. Waith, and many others whom we have visited, they may justly feel themselves a favored race, for their situation might be envied by the poor of nations, where freedom is better known ! But under severe and cruel masters it becomes a state of ceaseless vexation, and misery.

On the very important question of general slavery I do not feel that my experience, hitherto, in the West Indies either warrants me to speak with confidence, or enables me to judge with accuracy. But I will take care to note for you such facts as, from time to time, shall occur to my observation, and may some day, perhaps, obey your commands, by giving you the reflections they create in a separate letter.

Very much to the discredit of Barbadoes numbers of old, diseased, decrepit negroes, at once, objects of compassion, and of horror, are seen lying at the corners, or begging about the streets. This, like the toleration of the swarms of mendicants in England, is an evil, and a nuisance, for which there is no excuse. If these



poor unfortunate negroes are free, they should be relieved by a general tax upon the island : if slaves, the law should compel every master to provide for his own. Should the laws of humanity be insufficient, and those of justice inadequate, a law of coercion should constrain the unfeeling owner to protect and cherish the being, whose youth and vigour have been expended for his benefit ; and who, having worn out his days, in the heavy toils of bondage, is grown aged and infirm !

What can be so unworthy ! what so culpable or disgraceful, as the cruel inhumanity and sordid injustice, which render a master capable of neglecting in old age, the slave from whom he has exacted all the labour of youth, and all the vigour of manhood ! Perhaps nothing portrays in more melancholy demonstration, the possible depravity of the human heart ! No longer able to exert himself to his owner's profit, the aged slave enfeebled by years, and exhausted by toil, is left to beg his *yam* from door to door !—abandoned by his cruel master he is a pensioner upon promiscuous charity, or is allowed to fall a prey to disease, and to want !

Without some compulsory law the slaves of the avaricious and of the lower orders, who are, themselves, scarcely removed from indigence, must ever be subject to this hard lot of neglect and cruelty.

The first specimen we saw of West India negroes—the first example of slaves was singularly calculated to impress us with sentiments of compassion and disgust. It occurred at the very moment too when the impression would be most powerful, and consequently will ever remain indelible. Immediately on our coming to anchor in Carlisle bay, a woman appeared alongside the ship in a small boat with some bad fruit, tobacco, salt fish, and other articles of traffic. She was rowed by two negroes, who, we learned, were her slaves. Two such objects of human form and human misery had never before met our eyes! They were feeble, meager, and dejected—half-starved, and half-naked; and, in figure, too accurately resembling hungry and distempered grey-hounds! They crouched upon their heels and haunches in the boat—their naked bones almost pierced their filthy and eruptive skins—their wasted frames trembled with debility—and while their hol-

low eyes and famished countenances rendered them ghastly images of horror, their whole appearance shocked humanity, and appalled the sight!——Are these, we exclaimed, what are called slaves? Is this the state to which human beings are reduced in bondage?—Afflicting and cruel indeed! Well may slavery be deemed a curse! Can it be possible that these spectres once were men! Are such the objects we are to see—are these the wretched and deplorable beings who are to appear every day, and every hour before our eyes? Forbid it humanity: forbid it heaven!—Such was the apostrophe of the moment, and I feel a sincere gratification in being able to inform you that the melancholy subjects of this first impression were not correct specimens of the general mass of slaves. Still is it grievous that any such examples should be seen, but we hope to find them only rare instances, for we learn that the large gangs of negroes kept by the great merchants, and the planters, are generally treated with kindness and humanity, and appear contented and in comfort.

But it is easy to distinguish the slaves of the opulent and respectable inhabitants from



those of the poor and needy people of the town. The latter, being in poverty themselves, can only give to their negroes a scanty allowance of food, while their indigence induces them to exact an over-proportion of labour. Hence the slaves of this class of people appear too often with sharp bones and hungry flavid countenances, having eruptions about the body, and their skins of an unhealthy obfuscate hue. Their general appearance indeed is dirty and unwholesome, and strikingly marks their neglected state. Want and wretchedness are deeply stamped in every line of their persons—and they may not inaptly be said to resemble the worn-out horse, or the starved and jaded ass, too often seen trembling under a heavy burden—or reeling in an old tattered cart upon the roads of England.

It is not the practice to load the slaves with superfluity of clothing.—A shirt, and a pair of breeches, or only the latter, for the men; and a single petticoat for the women, constitute the whole apparel.—Bedding and bed-clothes find no place in their list of necessities: they usually sleep on a hard plank, in the clothing of the day. Repose is both

ensured and sweetened to them by labour—and the head needs no pillow but the arm. Some who, by means of industry and œconomy, are more advanced in their little comforts, procure a kind of matting, a paillasse of plantain leaves, or some other species of bedding, to defend them from the rough plank; but this is an indulgence self-attained, not a necessity provided by the master. The architecture of their little huts is as rude as it is simple. A roof of plantain leaves, with a few rough boards, nailed to the coarse pillars which support it, forms the whole building.—The leeward-side is commonly left in part open, and the roof projects to some distance over the door-way, forming a defence against both the sun and the rain.

Notwithstanding the great heat experienced by Europeans, the negroes feel the evenings chilly, and we frequently see them crowding round the bit of fire which they make for cooking their supper. This is commonly in the open air near to the door of the hut; but they sometimes place it upon the middle of the dirt floor within the building—where they seem to have great enjoyment in squat-

ting round it, amidst the thick cloud of smoke, to whiff additional fumes from the short pipe or fagar, and to join in loud and merry song.

Smoking is an universal custom among them. In order to be at all moments provided for this enjoyment, they carry in their breeches pocket a short pipe, about an inch in length from the bowl; or instead of this a leaf of tobacco rolled into a fagar. Very often the pipe is so short, or the fagar so closely smoked away, as to be in danger of burning the nose, or even the lips. I have frequently seen them smoking with the pipe so short as to hold it in the mouth by pressing with the lips upon the lower part of the bowl. They often kindle their pipes from one another's mouths, by putting bowl to bowl and nose to nose, and smoking into each others eyes, until the tobacco has taken fire.

The food of the negroes is issued to them weekly, under the inspection of the manager. It is very simple and but little varied; breakfast, dinner, and supper being similar to each other, and for the most part the same throughout the year. It consists mostly of Guinea



corn, with a small bit of salt meat—or salt fish. Formerly a bunch of plantains was given to each slave as the weekly allowance ; but the plantain walks being mostly worn out, this is become an expensive provision. Rice, maize, yams, eddoes, and sweet potatoes form an occasional change, but the Guinea corn is, commonly, issued as the weekly supply ; and in order to obtain some variety of food, they barter this in exchange for other provisions, or sell it for money, and with that buy salt meat or vegetables. We occasionally see them offering the Guinea corn for sale ; and on being asked why they sell it, they thus express themselves—“ Me no like for have him Guinea corn always ! Massa gib me Guinea corn too much—Guinea corn to-day—Guinea corn to-morrow—Guinea corn eb’ry day—Me no like him Guinea corn—him Guinea corn no good for gnhyaam.”

The weekly supply being issued to them on the Sunday, it becomes their own care how to husband it so as to have a sufficiency of food until the following Sabbath. Those who are industrious have little additions of their own, either from vegetables grown on

the spot of ground allotted to them, or purchased with the money obtained for the pig, the goat, or other stock raised about their huts in the negro yard.

A mess of pottage, or very hot soup, called pepper-pot, is one of their favorite dishes, and one indeed which is generally esteemed by the inhabitants, and by strangers. It is prepared by stewing various kinds of vegetables with a bit of salt meat, or salt fish, and seasoning it very high with capsicum, or some species of the red pepper. The vegetable, called squashes, is much used in these pepper pots. Bread, which is esteemed so essential, and held as the staff of life by the people of Europe, is unknown among the slaves of the West Indies: nor, indeed, is it in common use among their masters, but they find very excellent substitutes in the yam, the cassada, and the eddoe.

The common round of labour of the slaves is from sun-rise to sun-set, having intervals of rest allowed them, at the times of breakfast, and dinner.

The negroes are generally sad thieves; they appear to know no sense of honesty. Ignorant of all moral principle, they steal without feeling any sense of wrong, and without any apprehension, except that of being detected. The planters are obliged to employ one or two of the most trusty of them in the capacity of watchmen to guard, by close and constant attention, the orchards, plantain walks, provision stores, and the like, from the depredations of their own and their neighbour's slaves. Although they have no remorse in stealing whensoever and wheresoever opportunity offers, still they feel peculiarly prone to robbing their masters; and this they do not even consider a theft, as is too evident by an expression very common among them, viz. "*Me no tief him: me take him from Massa.*"

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*Concerning the elephantiasis, or endemial malady of  
Barbadoes.*

April 9.

**I**N speaking to you of the exemption of Barbadoes from great and destructive sickness, I remarked that, although it escaped some general ills, it was visited with an afflictive malady peculiarly its own. As this forms a characteristic feature of the country, and cannot but attract the notice, and excite the curiosity of strangers, you would not excuse me were I to neglect offering you a few words upon the subject.

The disease is the *elephantiasis*—called by some the “*glandular disease*,” but, by the many, designated simply the “*Barbadoes disease*.” It commonly appears in the form of an enormous and frightful enlargement of one or both legs; but occasionally affects other parts, particularly the scrotum, which becomes increased to a

surprising bulk. When once established, it is extremely difficult to remove, and for the most part proves to be incurable. It affects the general health, less than might be expected, and frequently exists for many years without seeming materially to impair the constitution; often, indeed, the person attacked with it bears it about throughout the remainder of a long life. It is mostly seen among the negroes, but it is too common also among the creole whites, and even suffers not the Europeans to escape. Although so frequent in Barbadoes, as to be held in a great degree peculiar or endemial, it is not wholly confined to this country: some instances of being seen in the neighbouring islands.

It would seem not to have been so prevalent as it now is from any very distant period of time; for about the year 1760 died at Barbadoes a man named Francis Briggs, more commonly known by the fictitious appellation of Christopher Columbus, who, from the uncommon and monstrous appearance of his legs, had been represented as the bug-bear or object of terror for the purpose of frightening children.

Male and female, young, middle-aged, and old, black and white, are now all subject to its attack; and, in walking the streets, the eye is distressed, at almost every corner, with the appearance of this hideous deformity,

The disease usually begins with an affection of the inguinal glands, from whence a red streak, or line of inflammation extends down the limb, in the direction of the lymphatic vessels; the part affected becoming tumefied, and taking on a shining and œdematous appearance. The swelling gradually occupies the whole of the leg, increasing until, in many instances, the limb is more than double its ordinary size. The skin assumes a morbid appearance, grows rough and scaly, or is covered with irregular wart-like risings. In some cases deep belts or indentations appear in various parts of the tumor, as if formed by the pressure of ligatures: in others the swelling bulges out in a number of irregular protrusions: sometimes, from extreme distension, the skin ruptures or breaks into cracks and fissures, and a watery fluid oozes out, which on exposure to the air grows gelatinous upon the surface. The foot frequently partakes



of the disease: but in many cases the immense tumor of the leg terminates abruptly at the ankle, hanging over the foot in knotty, and scaly excrescences. The deformity thus becomes diversified—the enormous bulk of leg appearing under a variety of unseemly and disgusting forms. As the enlargement increases, the whole extremity becomes hard and scaly; and the distended skin, which, at first, indented, grows thick and corneous, and wholly resists the pressure of the finger.

It has been found on dissection that, from the effused lymph which originally caused the tumor having become coagulated and hardened, the substance of the enlarged limb has assumed an appearance not unlike brawn—the morbid skin, and the cellular membrane under it, having grown into a tough, horny, and almost cartilaginous consistence.

From this unsightly malady being mostly accompanied with fever of an intermittent type, we often hear it termed “the fever and ague.” Indeed from the periodical returns of the paroxysms, and from the tumefaction succeeding to them, the disease has been very

generally considered only as an effect resulting from intermittent fever. The practice, said to be successful in removing it, seems also to be founded upon this view of it. Regard being had to the fever as the original affection, the elephantiasis is considered only as a sequel, and the curative means are directed solely to the removal of the febrile symptoms : which being effected, by antimony and the bark, the patient is sent for a time to some other island, by way of change of climate, in order to prevent a relapse. No particular attention is paid to the tumor, which, on the fever being removed, is expected gradually to subside. But sometimes, instead of receding, it remains stationary, or is increased ; or if it did subside, is renewed on any future recurrence of the fever.

Often a return to Barbadoes brings a return of the intermittent, and a consequent addition to the enlargement of the already thickened extremity ; and from the attacks of the disease recurring in frequent repetition, there remains no way of preventing it from being established into an unseemly deformity, but by seeking the remedy of a more temperate climate. Frequently the disorder seems

to be entirely subdued by a few years residence in England, yet again recurs on the patient returning to Barbadoes.

Some regard the disease in a directly opposite point of view, considering the glandular tumor, with its attendant inflammation of the lymphatics, as the primary affection, and the fever merely as symptomatic. It is not consistent with my present purpose, nor does experience warrant me to enter more minutely into this question ; but I may offer you a few extracts of cases wherefrom you will be enabled to collect a more just and accurate idea of the commencement, and the progress of this singular and distressing malady.

“ Mr. Daniel Maffiah, aged fifty-three, of the Jewish religion, was a very healthy boy till eighteen, when he was attacked with a disease, which at that period was very unusual indeed. Without any known cause, he complained of a foreness, and swelling of the left groin. When he had felt this about a quarter of an hour, he was seized with the cold fit of fever ; a burning hot fever succeeded, which was followed by profuse sweating. The whole



paroxysm was accompanied with violent pains of the head and back, and great sickness at the stomach, and reaching. This first attack left very little swelling in the left ancle. From this fit, for the four following years, he had this disease in the same manner about once a month, with a gradual increase of the left leg; so that it became eighteen or twenty inches round the calf. After he was twenty-two years of age, the attacks were five, six, seven, or eight times each year. From the year 1764, being then about thirty-six, he has been irregularly attacked, sometimes in the right, and sometimes in the left leg; each time the legs were left larger and larger. At the age of thirty-nine the right leg was considerably increased in size. In the centre of the calf of this leg there arose a lump as big as a goose's egg, which burst of itself, and discharged a fluid as clear as water, in large quantity. The swelling abated, but each succeeding attack left the leg so increased in bulk, that at this time it measures thirty-six inches in every part of the leg, from below the knee to the ancle. The feet of both legs are of their natural size. The left leg measures twenty-six inches. The swelling is very smooth, except

on the right heel, where there are great excrescences, which have the appearance of large corns, or warts. The increase of the legs seems to have been so gradual, that he has not been in the least sensible of it ; nor has he experienced any other inconvenience from the disease, except when he has been weakened by sickness, and then he feels his legs heavy."

" During the first sixteen years of his being subject to the disease, the local affections were always evident. Since that time, *i. e.* for about twenty years past, but more particularly lately, he has scarcely been able to determine whether the local symptoms, or the cold fit came on first. He says, that lately he finds the first local symptom to be a purple hue on the finger nails, and a great coldness in the palms of the hands. His appetite is very good, every function of life is uninterrupted, and he has been free from every other disease."

" Mr. P—, aged twenty-six, a native of Barbadoes, has been subject, since the age of eleven, to the glandular disease. It first attacked him with a swelling of the leg and thigh, which he perceived in the morning on

rising from bed. The swelling of the extremity was uniform, and, except a little pain which he felt in the groin, where, on examination, the glands were found enlarged, was not attended with the least mark of inflammation, or fever. This enlargement continued for about fourteen days, when he was seized with the regular paroxysm of fever; which was however preceded by a red streak in the thigh, and a considerable affection of the inguinal glands. A violent inflammation of the leg and thigh immediately preceded the hot fit, and continued for seven or eight days. This disease left a great degree of swelling, which has continued with little variation ever since. About two years after, the attacks being frequent, he was advised to change his climate, and accordingly went to England, where his general health was much improved. During his stay there, which was about eight months, he had no fresh attack of the glandular disease; but the enlargement continued nearly the same. Soon after his return to Barbadoes, he had a regular attack of the glandular disease, which lasted as long, and was as severe as those he had experienced before he went to England. These returns continued for several years to



be very frequent, but lately have been much diminished, both in number and severity."

" The history of the patient's case, whose leg I dissected, as far as I could inform myself, was as follows :—She had laboured under the glandular disease for ten years : the first attack was at fifteen years of age, and was attended with fever. At every return she found her leg much inflamed, increased in size, stiff, contracted, and gradually enlarged, till it became so enormous as to be extremely troublesome. She then applied to me to perform amputation, of which she recovered ; but was soon after seized with the same disease in the other leg, and died in consequence of it \*."

Different opinions have been held respecting the origin of this singular affection. From it being most frequent, or first observed among the negroes, many have believed it to be imported with them from the shores of Africa. But this opinion is divested of probability, by the extraordinary prevalence of the disease at Barbadoes. Were it brought by the slaves

\* Hendy on the glandular disease of Barbadoes.

from Africa, it would be equally common in the other islands ; and not being infectious, would not be seen among the white creoles, or the Europeans. It is undoubtedly the indigenous offspring of the island, and possibly is connected with a peculiarly arid state of the atmosphere; for in the islands shadowed with thick forests and vegetation, it is still unknown, and has only grown common at Barbadoes, in proportion as its woods have been removed, and the surface of the island left unsheltered.

Except on its early attack, or at the periods of acute relapse, the disease is attended with little or no pain, and the enlargement sometimes proceeds so gradually, as for the person himself to be in a degree insensible of it. He walks about as usual, and appears to suffer but little inconvenience, either from the additional bulk, or the great increase of weight. Hence it is often less afflicting to the individual, than offensive to others. It is extremely repugnant to the sight ; and as the negroes go about the streets with these diseased limbs exposed to every eye, Europeans,

but recently arrived, are extremely annoyed by their filthy and monstrous appearance.

Perhaps nature has not formed, nor can the human mind conceive an object at once so disgusting, and so pitiable, as an old half-famished negrowoman—of withered frame—tottering and trembling about with her loose and naked skin hanging shrivelled in deep-furrowed wrinkles ; and dragging after her one or both legs grown into an immense bulk of hideous disease—her feet only toes, protruding from this huge mass of distempered leg. Yet such are the objects too often seen hobbling about the streets of Bridge-town !

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*Farms in Barbadoes termed plantations or estates. Poor cottagers. Native Barbadians. Their extravagant opinion concerning the importance of the island. Examples in proof that the negro form and colour are not the mere consequence of climate and locality.*

April, 10.

AS planter here supersedes the title of farmer so does plantation that of farm. The land is cultivated in a number of divisions, which in Europe, might receive the common name of farms, but in Barbadoes, they are termed plantations, or estates. Of these the distinguishing appellation is not derived from the name of the existing possessor ; but from some specific title long since accorded to them, or from the name of the original possessor, or of the family to whom they have for many years belonged. Thus a person, going to visit Mr. Hollingsworth or Mr Waith, would not say he was going to Mr. Waith's, or Mr. Hollingsworth's, but to " Colleton's," or to " Spend-

love" ; these being the names by which the estates have long been known.

Besides the great number of hospitable mansions found on the large plantations, in the different parts of the country—many humble dwellings attract the notice of the traveller, and improve the general scenery of the island. Of some of these I have before spoken. They are the cottages of a poorer order of white people—of obscure individuals, remote from the great class of merchants and planters, and who obtain a scanty livelihood by cultivating a small patch of earth, and breeding up poultry, or what they term stock for the markets. They are descended from European settlers, but from misfortune, or misconduct, in some of the race, are reduced to a state far removed from independence ; often, indeed, but little superior to the condition of free negroes.

Curiosity has led us to visit several of these families, and we find that, throughout many generations, their predecessors have lived constantly, in the island. Some have not been able to trace back their pedigree to the period when their ancestors first arrived, and there-

fore have no immediate thought or regard, concerning the mother country ; but abstractedly consider themselves only in the detached sense of Barbadians, fondly believing that in the scale of creation there can be no other country, kingdom, or empire equal to their transcendant island—to their own Barbadoes: and hence the adage “*What would poor old England do, were Barbadoes to forsake her ?*” The same spirit of attachment, and of preference is also betrayed in the common expression, “*neither Charib nor Creole, but true Barbadian*”—thus proudly distinguishing themselves as the true-born natives of the island which they consider superior to all others. They do not even admit themselves to be *Creoles*, but they are “Barbadians”—a something distinct and superior—a something different from, and unlike the inhabitants of the other West India islands!

The pride attaching to this sentiment, I have before remarked to you, has diffused itself even to the negroes, who now loudly echo the boastful term,—“*me Badian !*”

In the part of the island near the tar pits, we happened to call in at a small hut, or



cabin, where we met with a large family of Barbadian cottagers; and, with all the inquisitiveness of strangers, we addressed the good people in a multitude of interrogatories, and were highly gratified with their replies. They were living amidst the mountains, apparently shut from the world, and but seldom exposed to the intrusion of strangers. The old dame of the house was nearly seventy years of age. We found her occupied in playful attentions with two of her grand children—two, of seven, of the offspring of her daughter. Making inquiries respecting the old woman's history we learned that she could trace back her family in regular lineal descent, as far as her great grandfather, the successors of whom have never removed from Barbadoes; so that the children we here saw, were to a certainty as distant as the sixth generation, and probably much more remote, in direct descent, from parents who had always lived in the torrid zone. One of the children was about six—the other eight years old. In fairness of skin, in feature, and in figure, they might have been mistaken for children born in England, or any other temperate climate.

Near Hilloughby hill we met with another cottage family, regularly descended from British parents, of long standing in the island, and having all the features, and general appearance of Europeans. The father of this family was sixty years old, and some of his predecessors had lived to upwards of ninety years. We could not trace the pedigree so accurately as in the other family—but this probably was not less ancient, the old man having no knowledge but of his Barbadian predecessors, and not knowing when they first came to the island. The occupation of this family was that of planting a small spot of land with ginger, and raising stock to sell at Bridge-town market. They were poor, like the others, and compelled to labour much in full exposure to the sun. Like the negroes, too, their diet consisted chiefly of vegetables.

At the fort, commanding the entrance of Carlisle bay, are living a man and his wife, both natives of Barbadoes, whose ancestors for generations, beyond all that tradition has traced to them, have resided constantly in the island: sitting round the mother we saw five

fine children—their offspring, of face and form as fair as the fairest Europeans.

These facts stand in direct opposition to the speculative doctrines of those who derive the various colours of the human race from climate or locality of residence, together with the concomitant circumstances of diet, and mode of life. Consistent with such opinion it follows that the offspring of Europeans, living constantly in the torrid zone, and, more particularly, if using the same diet, and exposed to similar habits, and occupations, must degenerate, and, in future ages, become negroes.

The three families above-mentioned are, undoubtedly, of the fifth or sixth, or, perhaps, a still more distant generation, in direct lineal descent, from parents, originally, English; but whose offspring, through every race, to the present children, have always resided between the tropics. They have, moreover, lived in circumstances of mediocrity, exposed to labour, and to the full influence of climate; or have known only the abode of poverty, and by needy fortune have been compelled to use a diet very similar to that of



the Africans. Yet is there not an individual among them, who, either in form, feature, or colour has made even the slightest approach to that change, which a constant residence, through so many generations, must have effected, were their descendants, of future ages, to become of negro form, and hue.

Allowing this change of our species to be as slow and gradual as the warmest advocate of the doctrine might suppose, it were impossible for the mind to conceive a period, when the offspring of Europeans would be broiled into perfect negroes, if no sort of commencement—no mark whatever of deviation—nor any approach to the conversion, could be traced, either in the features, or the skin, of those of the fifth, or sixth, or perhaps of the eighth or ninth generation ; after a residence, too, in the successive races, of nearly two hundred years under a tropical sun, and being exposed to most of the other causes, said to promote the expected revolution of their frames !

Children born in England have not fairer skins, nor features more correctly European.

The younger have all the cherub face and form of the lovely smiling babes of a temperate climate. Those more advanced are thinner, and bear about them more of that languor, which universally results from long residence in great and constant heat ; but still have they no kind of approach to the thickened lip—the large mouth—the projecting countenance—the flattened nose—the lengthened head—the woolly hair—or the dark skin of the negroes.

The opinions of the gentlemen of the island seem to be all against the idea of such a conversion of the human body, and we are assured that multitudes of families, in addition to those we have seen, now live in Barbadoes, who in progressive descent, through successive generations, for nearly two hundred years, have resided in the island, without the slightest change being perceptible in their offspring of the present day.

To whatever age the parents may have lived, it is remarkable that, although the face and hands shall have become brown, from immediate exposure to the sun, the other parts of their bodies remain white and unchanged ; and

not the softest shade—not the slightest tinge of the acquired darkness of hands or face is communicated to the descendants—the children being, invariably, born as perfect whites as those of Europe. If, therefore, it could, for a moment, be admitted that merely the tanned countenance were an approach to the negro state, this being completely extinguished in each succeeding race, it could never advance beyond the feeble change effected in a single generation.

But the very strong and incontrovertible fact with respect to the American Indians, militates so decidedly against this doctrine of conversion, that scarcely another argument can be necessary to its refutation. Although living for unknown ages under the same parallel of latitude as the Africans, and exposed to precisely similar habits and occupations, not an individual of them has ever been known to turn negro, either in skin or feature. Nor, indeed, would it be less reasonable to expect that the negroes of Africa, or those of the West India islands, should change to Indians, than that Indians, or Europeans, should be converted into Africans!

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*No accurate tidings at Barbadoes of the approach of the Portsmouth Convoy. Symptoms of the troops moving. Drs. Henderson and Cave ordered to remain in charge of the sick of the St. Domingo division. Author cautions his friend not to listen to the alarming rumours of sickness, and death. Great numbers in hospital—their maladies mild, and European—not endemic. Author witnesses a case of yellow fever in company with Dr. Jackson.*

April 11.

COULD it have been foretold that on the 11th day of April the people of Barbadoes would have remained wholly ignorant regarding the situation of an immense fleet of ships which sailed for that island, from England, in the month of November preceding, the mysteries of the prophet Brothers had scarcely been held more absurd! Yet so it is, for all here still continue in total darkness respecting the Portsmouth convoy! But some symptoms of moving are now exhibited, which seem to indicate that the troops already arrived will not be longer detained inactive.

Among other marks of approaching service, we have been called upon for a general return of the sick, and it appears in orders that Drs. Henderson and Cave, with a detachment of our staff, are to remain at Barbadoes in charge of the hospitals appropriated to the St. Domingo division; and I may add, with regret, that we are likely to leave these gentlemen busy duty, the sick-list, particularly of the Cork division, being very numerous. In consequence of many of the ships arriving in a sickly state, our hospitals became crowded as soon as they were erected, notwithstanding our having the further accommodation of converting some of the barracks into sick wards. But we have now in some measure relieved the hospitals, by forming a small encampment and putting the convalescents under canvas.

We expect that you will hear from various quarters, and read in all the newspapers sad histories of disease and death, but let me caution you not to believe that we are all dying, or that the yellow-fanged monster is let loose amongst us. Should it be told you that more than a thousand sick are already in

the hospitals, be not deceived into a belief that so many are about to become the victims of climate, and yellow fever; nor suffer yourself to be persuaded that the whole of us have “failed to our graves.”

The hospitals are certainly thronged, and the number of sick is very considerable, but this cannot be placed to the account of the climate, or of endemic disease, for, nearly all the men, now in hospital, *arrived* in sickness. They had been detained on Spike Island, or in crowded transports, during many weeks of inhospitable weather, whereby extensive disease was generated among them; and hence it happened that, upon arriving at Barbadoes, the troops in many of the ships, although not actually ill, had approaching disease so strongly marked in their features, that it became necessary to remove every individual of them on shore in order to have the vessels thoroughly fumigated and purified; and from this circumstance it occurred that many slight cases were thrown into the hospitals, which otherwise would not have appeared upon the list. This will in some measure explain to you why the hospitals are crowded, although neither “yel-



low fever," nor any other malignant disease reigns amongst us.

Of the many hundreds now on the sick-list a very great majority are slight cases, or convalescents from diseases they had suffered upon the passage. We have reason to believe that very few of their disorders are of fatal tendency, and that a great proportion of the sick will very soon be able to return to their regiments.

While I am upon the subject of sickness I may remark to you that I have had my first opportunity of seeing a case of that destructive malady, which has lately excited such universal alarm, under the term "yellow fever," but, perhaps, you are not prepared to hear that, after a residence of so many weeks in the West Indies, I have seen only a solitary example of that disease: yet such is the fact—for, amidst all our sickness, and crowded hospitals, only a single instance of "yellow fever" has, hitherto, occurred. I visited this patient with Dr. Jackson, the author who has so ably written upon the diseases of Jamaica, and obtained his clinical remarks concerning the

leading and more characteristic symptoms of the disease. You will believe that I readily formed the idea of making this interesting and important case an object of very minute attention ; and you will feel that the event has impressed upon my mind a very powerful sense of the subtle malignity of this devouring malady.

The patient was certainly very ill, but, to those who had not before witnessed the disease, he did not appear to be in any immediate danger ; nor did Dr. Jackson seem to think it a case of the highest degree of malignity ; but, alas ! on going to visit him the following morning, we found our poor soldier a cold and yellow corpse !

## LETTER VII.

*Further hope—and further disappointment. Another division of the Portsmouth convoy reaches Barbadoes. Rumour of a secret Expedition. Concerning the probable separation of the author and his comrades. Expertness of Negroes in the water. One of their modes of Bathing. Negroes attentive to their teeth. Mode of cleaning them with sand and sea water.*

Barbadoes, April 13.

WERE we in danger, as often as in alarm, our friends might, indeed, have serious apprehensions both for us, and for “good old Barbadoes.” The ensign of *alarm* has again appeared this morning at the several signal posts along the coast, implying that another strange fleet was in sight; and which was observed to be standing directly for the island. We were all very quickly on the look-out—our only fear that it should prove to be but a part, instead of the whole of our long wished for convoy from Portsmouth.

By means of the telescope it was soon discovered that many of the ships had troops



on board, and that they were dressed in scarlet uniform ; no doubt, therefore, remained of their being friends. As they came near we climbed up to the main-yard, to enjoy the delighting scene presented by their gently sailing into harbour ; and as you know how often I have had to note our disappointments regarding this disastrous expedition, you will comprehend how eagerly I greeted the termination of them in the prospect now before my eye. Pleased and delighted to witness what we beheld as the arrival of the whole fleet, we counted the ships in great joy as they came into the bay ; when, having proceeded to the number of seventeen, judge of the mortification we felt upon discovering that still we had only welcomed a detached division of our expected convoy.

Standing upon the main-yard, numbering the ships as they dropped into the harbour, I anticipated the pleasure of sitting down in the evening to inform you that the different fleets of our expedition were, at last, safe in Carlisle bay—but on taking up my pen I have only to tell of new disappointments, which, in

truth, would seem to attach to these unhappy convoys in endless repetition. Instead of announcing to you the union of the two great divisions of our forces, from Cork and Portsmouth, I have only to speak of the arrival of another small branch of Admiral Cornwallis's fleet, which separated soon after leaving Spithead; and which, instead of bringing us intelligence, has every thing to learn concerning the body of the convoy, not having fallen in with any part of it on the passage.

A rumour is strongly prevalent among us, that a division of the troops, now assembled, at Barbadoes, is to be detached on secret service. Should this take place, and the detachment be formed from the St. Domingo armament, it is more than possible that our happy quartette may yet be disjointed before we reach our original destination. Of course our expectations have always led to this: yet from having lived on board, together, and in the utmost harmony, during a period of many months, it would be matter of regret, to either of us, to be taken from our congenial mess, at the very eve of sailing for our destined port, and particularly as we must be separated

under circumstances which would render it probable that we should never meet again.

This idea might lead me to expatiate very painfully upon the situation of multitudes around me. But to indulge in such feelings would not be opportune: whatever reflection may teach—or whatever may be the event of the great scene before us, with respect to individuals, I trust that every Briton, embarked in the cause, will meet, with all the firmness of his nation's character, whatever is destined to be his fate in war.

I do not recollect to have noted to you in any former letter the great fondness which the negroes have for the water, and their singular address and expertness in moving upon that element. In one of our late walks we witnessed a scene strongly in proof of this, having met with a slave who was amusing himself by exercises of uncommon agility in the sea. Not an otter, nor a beaver, nor scarcely a dolphin could appear more in his element. He was quite at play in the water, and diverting himself in all kinds of antic tricks, and gambols. He dived to the bottom—swam



in a variety of ways—walked or paddled along like a dog—concealed himself for a long time under water—laid himself at rest upon its surface, and appeared as much at his ease, in the ocean, as if he had never breathed a lighter, nor trodden a firmer element.

This expertness is much derived from an early habit of bathing, or, as it might be termed, exercising in the water; and it renders the negroes peculiarly useful in moments of distress, such as in cases of accident at sea, or in the harbour. Let them have a boat, or a canoe, and it is almost impossible they can be drowned. Even if they are upset, and the boat turned keel upwards, they rise at her sides, and there continue to swim and paddle until they again *right her*, then bailing out the water resume their seats and proceed as if nothing had happened.

A sense of cleanliness attaches to their love of the water, for we not only see them often in the sea, but frequently also washing themselves in the rivulets. It seems to form one of their favorite amusements to stand in the sea, or river, and to take up water in both hands

and pour it over their shoulders down their backs. This is practised both by the men and the women, and is one of their most frequent methods of bathing.

Another mark of cleanliness also prevails among them which was less to be expected; viz. that of paying great attention to their teeth. The chew-stick which is here employed for cleaning the teeth is far more in use among the negroes, than the tooth brush among the lower classes of people in England.

Our adroit negro, amidst his many gambols in the water, dived often to the bottom of the sea, and brought up a handful of sand. With this rough dentifrice he soundly scrubbed his teeth, and by way of essence to wash it off, plunged down, for another handful, with his mouth wide open; thus, alternately, repeating the rubbing, and sea water washing, until he felt that his pearls were duly contrasted with his ebon countenance.

## LETTER VIII.

*Author separated from his long associated comrades. Embark, on board the Grenada, on a secret expedition. Conjectures regarding its destination. Embarkation of troops on board the Grenada. Accommodation of the officers and soldiers. Rapid accumulation of filth on board. Troops preserved from sickness by bathing, and by keeping a great proportion of them always in the open air. Force employed in the expedition. A fleet arrives at Barbadoes at the time the expedition sails. Author addresses his friend from the opposite side of the sun.*

Ship Grenada, at Sea, April 17.

THE apprehended division of our long associated mess has taken place! It has fallen to my lot to join the reported expedition under General Whyte, and I am separated from my friends, perhaps, soon to meet again, perhaps, to meet no more! To what quarter we are bound is held in secrecy. Curaçoa, Demarara, St. Eustatia, and various other destinations have been severally conjectured, but from the course we are at present steering the coast of Guiana would seem to be most probable.



We were ordered away at very short notice. On returning to the Lord Sheffield after my visit at the hospital on the morning of the 14th inst. I received instructions to embark on board the Grenada transport before 12 o'clock ; and to take upon me the direction of a detachment of the hospital staff, appointed to attend a division of the army, which was to sail that afternoon, on secret service.

Being advised to take with me as little baggage as possible, and assured that I might expect soon to return, in order to proceed with General Whyte, to St. Domingo, I made up a soldier's kit of apparel, and left all my heavier packages, under the care of my late comrades, in the Lord Sheffield.

The Grenada is a very fine vessel, and sails remarkably well. Like the Lord Sheffield, she is a West India trader, engaged as a transport only for the passage out, and as soon as she has completed her voyage is to return to England laden with sugar, cotton, or other West India produce.

I thought myself fortunate in being ap-

pointed to so good a ship ; and, hearing that troops were to be thickly stowed on board the different vessels of the expedition, anticipated much of comfort upon the passage, by observing that the Grenada was free from the crowd I had expected to meet. But my self-gratulations proved to be somewhat premature. Upwards of three hundred troops arrived quickly after, and a scene of crowd and confusion was introduced surpassing all that even fancy had created. Many of the men were intoxicated—most of them were up to their knees in water, in the boat, and some as wet from head to foot as if they had been dragged through the sea. In the hurry of scrambling up the ship, two of them fell overboard, and narrowly escaped being drowned. The decks soon became so crowded, as to render it impossible to pass, and amidst the throng of living stowage a further inconvenience was produced from the hatch-ways being obliged to be opened for the reception of cannon, ammunition, baggage, and other stores, which the ship's company were hoisting in on all sides.

Negroes, sailors, soldiers, and officers all mingled together, in one hurried and anxious

mas—some hard at work—some cursing and swearing—some reeling in drunkenness—some scrambling for a knapsack, or a firelock—some losing their hats—some hoisting baggage up the ship's side—some jumping on board—some hawling in provisions at the stern—each seeking individual or general accommodation—and all adding to the common confusion.

In the afternoon we were visited by the General, who came on board, to see if every thing was embarked ready for sailing in the evening: but the time required for getting in the guns and other heavy stores, and the numerous impediments occurring from such multitudes of persons crowding on board at the same moment, rendered this altogether impossible—however, by the great exertions which were made, we were able to get under weigh at an early hour the following morning.

The Lieutenant-Colonel commanding the regiment, the commanding officer of artillery, and myself, are the only officers who have the accommodation of separate births: all the others are obliged to be crowded together without beds, or mattresses, upon the naked decks of



the cabins, and even there, they are compelled to close-stowage to make room for them all.

On the upper deck the soldiers are still more thickly spread, they lie down without any other covering than their clothes of the day, using the arm, or the knapsack as a pillow : and so well do they stow that not a foot can find place between them. Happily the wind is very favorable, and we are led to believe that wheresoever we are bound the voyage will not be long. Having the steady breeze of the trades on her quarter, the ship is worked almost wholly by the helm, and we seldom require to shift the sails—occasional bracing being all that is necessary. Had the weather been bad and the wind against us, you will readily imagine the state we must have been in, with such a body of men, sick, and ill, and crowded in every quarter of the ship. Even as it is we have much difficulty in keeping them sufficiently clean to preserve them in health. They lie down in their clothes at night, where they have been standing or sitting the whole of the day, and from making the deck at once their sitting bench, their din-

ner board, and their bed, all about them soon grows filthy and offensive: pieces of broken food—floppings of broth, or grog, bits of meat, old bones, crumbs of biscuit, and various other kinds of filth collect under them, and about their clothing; and, from the great heat of climate, and still more unpleasant heat of crowd, this dirty commixture soon becomes sour and fetid; and would, in a short time, generate disease, were not some rigid rules of cleanliness strictly enforced.

Besides those who sleep upon the open deck above, there is another crowd in a more confined situation between decks. Observing this place to be very close, and not sufficiently ventilated, I have recommended that the men should be divided into three watches, and that two of the three divisions should be kept constantly upon the open deck, relieving those below every four hours. Likewise as a further means of prevention I have advised that all the men should bathe every morning, while the decks are thoroughly washed and cleaned. Fortunately I am supported in this by the approbation of Colonel Tilson, who is exceed-

ingly zealous to do every thing that can preserve the health of the soldiers, and has issued his orders accordingly.

We have contrived a method whereby the bathing is effected with less trouble than was at first apprehended. The men are regularly assembled by companies upon the quarter deck, at an early hour of the morning, and there undressing, two at a time, they go down to the waist of the ship, and remain at the bottom of the step leading from the quarter deck, until two or three buckets of water have been dashed upon them by some of their comrades standing directly above them upon the edge of the quarter deck, others being stationed at the sides to draw up water for the purpose. After being thus washed, they move on to the forecastle to dress themselves, others following in succession until the whole are bathed.

We find some difficulty in establishing this practice, but I hope in a few days to see it brought to the regularity of a military movement : the benefit of it is not confined simply to cleanliness of person, for while the bathing is going on, the decks, where the men sleep,



are thoroughly swept and washed, and it is matter of surprize to us to see the prodigious quantity of dirt, of remnants of food, and various other species of filth which collect within four-and-twenty hours. Its utility is also further extended, in the general movement it creates, and the refreshing coolness it brings to every one on board. Were the voyage to be long, our experience of the few past days seems to assure us that this daily washing would not merely be our best, but, perhaps, our only preservative from sickness.

The expedition consists of about thirteen hundred men of the 39th, 93d, and 99th regiments commanded by Lieutenant Colonels Tilson, Hislop and Gammell, and a party of artillery, under command of Captain Bagot. The squadron of the fleet employed with us is commanded by Commodore Parr, and consists of the Malabar of 50 guns, La Pique, Le Babet, and the Undaunted frigates—to which are added, the Grenada armed transport, with several sloops, and schooners.

At the time we were sailing from Carlisle bay on the morning of the 15th, an alarm

was fired, and the signal hoisted, denoting the approach of a fleet; but it was too distant, and the weather too hazy for us to ascertain distinctly what fleet it was—perhaps the long expected convoy; or possibly only another severed division of it. Even should it prove to have been the body of the fleet, bringing in the great bulk of the armament, it still is an extraordinary instance of delay, from adverse weather, that a convoy which sailed from Spit-head early in November, should only have reached Barbadoes on the 15th of April following, and it must stand as a striking example of the incalculable uncertainty of all maritime expeditions.

I must not forget to note to you that I am now addressing you from the opposite side of the sun. This day in latitude  $9^{\circ} 27'$  we passed immediately under that burning orb, receiving his perpendicular rays directly upon our heads. I have nothing further to tell you on this occasion. His southern face seems neither hotter, nor colder, brighter nor darker, than his northern. The only striking peculiarity arises from the novelty of looking to the north at noon, to take our meridian, and

habit will be required to reconcile this seeming inconsistency. While you at mid-day look south for the sun, I shall look north, and although our noon will be different, this circumstance will often mentally place me with you. The effect, I would flatter myself, will be reciprocal, and, attracted by his opposite sides, the cheering sun will be the medium of frequently associating us in warm and mutual sympathy.



## LETTER IX.

*Destination of the expedition. Ships come to anchor in shallow and muddy water. Tops of trees appear, but no land in sight. Common marks of land on approaching the shore. Author continues to make notes for his friend, without knowing when he may be able to send them. Troops prepare to disembark.*

At Sea, April 20.

OUR destination is no longer a secret ! The Captain went yesterday on board the Commodore, and received his instructions—when the Dutch colonies upon the coast of Guiana were avowed to be the object of our expedition.

In the evening we came into thick and muddy water indicating our approach to the shore ; but nothing of land could be perceived even from the top-gallant-mast head. This morning the sea was still more muddy, of a yellowish colour, and, comparatively, very shallow. Land was unquestionably near, but, still, not visible. In the course of the day trees were seen from the mast head, and we came to anchor only a few leagues from them

but, even yet, without being able to see the land. It is common to descry a peculiar streak at the horizon, or a kind of line, or fixed point in the clouds, denoting the land which a vessel approaches, long before it reaches the coast; but, here, we are in thick muddy water, near the shore, and with trees in view, without being able to distinguish any other mark of the territory before us. It seems to be a peculiar shore, the water being very thick and shallow at a great distance from the land.

My pen is continued to your idea, without knowing when I may be able to send you my letters; but I like to think toward you, and to address you, amidst all the variety of scenes as they pass before me.

The present would appear to be an important moment. Orders are issued for three days' provisions to be cooked, and for the troops to hold themselves in readiness for immediate debarkation. They have, consequently, been paraded this evening upon deck; their arms and accoutrements cleaned and inspected; and all put in a state for action. The soldiers are forewarned in general orders

that all irregular conduct, towards the inhabitants on landing, will subject them to certain punishment and disgrace; and plunder is prohibited on pain of death. The field-artillery, with carriages, sponges, ammunition, and all the necessary apparatus have been put into boats this evening from our ship, preparatory to being conveyed on shore with the troops in the morning, and after a day of great hurry and labour all is, now, quite in readiness for leaving the vessel.

Orders are issued concerning the plan of attack by the troops, and the station to be taken by the different ships; and all seems to imply a busy morrow, but, as mine will not be the most prominent post of danger, I shall hope to note to you the detail of our proceedings in a future letter. At present, I seek my birth, cordially bidding you . . . . good night!



## LETTER X.

*Author again upon terra firma. Capture of the united colony of Essequibo and Demarara. An accident occurs during the night. Troops sent on shore in small vessels. They run aground. Grenada and other ships anchor at the mouth of the river Demarara. Flag of truce returns, and is dispatched again on shore. Capitulation of Fort William Frederic. Soldiers fall sick on the passage. Effect produced on the sick by the idea of going into action. Landing in Demarara. Appearance of the town of Stabroek, and of the country. Hospitality of an English settler. Author proceeds upon duty. Fortune throws him into good quarters, without a billet. Surgeon Carrol attacked with an alarming malady.*

Stabroek, April 23.

I HAVE again the pleasure of addressing you upon terra firma, and of telling you that the united colony of Essequibo and Demarara is ours. All being in readiness for landing on the morning of the 21st, the troops were ordered to proceed on shore, with the earliest tide, and the frigates, with the Grenada, and the slave ship, were directed to take their stations before the fort, at the entrance of the river.

An unhappy accident had occurred, during the night, which might have been the

cause of much inconvenience, but, fortunately, it was soon remedied. The two long boats, with all the necessary implements for working the guns, that were to be landed with the troops, broke from their lashing, and had gone adrift from the ship. You will imagine that it was not a late hour of the morning when the accident was discovered. Men were sent out, immediately, in search of the boats, and they were found drifted out to sea far down to leeward, but with all the things safe on board. Luckily they were brought back in time to accompany the troops, the tide not serving at an early hour, for attempting the disembarkation.

At length the little fleet of sloops, schooners, and other small vessels, calculated, as it was believed, for the shallow sea they had to pass, got under weigh, and stood direct for the shore. The larger ships were unable to approach near enough to give any protection to the landing.

The small light vessels into which the troops and stores were removed, were some of them brought with us from Barbadoes for the

purpose—and some taken after our arrival upon the coast ; but, unfortunately, it proved that even these, light as they were, drew too much water for this muddy shore ; for, about five o'clock, we had the mortification to learn that our little fleet was fast aground deep fixed in mud. Finding the small vessels in this dilemma, our ship, together with the others which had sailed through a very confined channel towards the fort, came to anchor near the entrance of the Demarara river, having the fort, also a Dutch frigate, and a number of shipping in full view before them.

This was a more unhappy accident than the breaking loose of the boats with artillery stores, and might have proved of serious consequence, as the troops were compelled to remain until the next flood of tide, being equally unable either to reach the shore, or to return.

In the events of this day we had a further proof of the extreme uncertainty of military operations, more particularly when connected with, or dependent upon maritime movements. In the morning we had every



prospect of seeing the troops on shore, the fort taken, and the whole affair decided before we slept : but, in the evening, chagrin and disappointment, only, were our lot : the great expectations of the day having ended in bringing some of the ships to an anchor off the mouth of the river, and placing the troops in an unhappy dilemma, from which it was out of the power of man to extricate them, until the unerring operations of nature should send back the waters of the ocean to their relief.

The ships were anchored so near the river as to prevent the escape of any of the enemy's vessels, and the troops on board were ordered to lie on their arms, upon deck, during the night, to prevent a surprize ; and to be in readiness to act against the fort, at any hour they might be called upon.

At eight o'clock in the morning the flag of truce which had been sent off to the fort returned. Due secrecy was of course observed regarding the reply : and presently the boat was again dispatched to the fort : but as the little schooner fleet was ordered to return to the ships, at the flood of tide, instead of pro-

ceeding to land the troops ; and as no orders were given to advance to the attack of the fort, it was presumed that the answer had not been hostile.

Between 10 and 11 o'clock the flag of truce again returned, and it was then announced that the capitulation was accepted, and that the fort was immediately to surrender to our troops. A party was accordingly detached, to take possession of a post agreed upon, and the whole garrison was to march out at 4 o'clock. Consequently by evening we found ourselves fully established in Fort William Frederic, the strongest, and indeed the only defence of the colony.

Notwithstanding our strict observance of cleanliness, and all our care to prevent disease, I am sorry to remark, that numbers of the soldiers fell sick on the passage : but in mentioning this I ought to observe that the 39th and 99th regiments were mostly composed of draughts from various other young regiments, consisting principally of old men, and unseasoned boys, who had been collected together, not according to the best regu-

lations of the recruiting service ; and also, that multitudes of them had been sick on the passage from Cork to Barbadoes, consequently many (of those now ill) are only suffering from a relapse of former disease.

It is worthy of remark that, although upon the passage, not a morning had passed without a considerable number being reported for the sick-list, we had not one new patient the day it was intended to make the landing ; but, on the contrary, the list of the preceding day was diminished. The spirit of attack seemed to operate as a specific remedy. Many actually recovered, and were allowed to join their companies. Others stole off, without reporting themselves, fearful the doctors should not allow that they were well enough to be reported efficient : and others, far too weak to bear arms, feebly crawled from under the awning of the quarter-deck, which had been converted into a sick ward for their accommodation, and begged of me to permit them to go on shore to join their comrades in the battle. The idea of going into action proved a more salutary stimulus than could be found in the whole of the London or Edinburgh Pharma-



copœia ; and, strange to add, the sound of the destructive cannon promised to be a more healing balm, than the mildest emollient prescribed by the doctor.

In adverting to the country, from whence I address you, I may remark that circumstances attended our landing, which were not the most calculated to create a favorable impression of the colony. The morning had been clouded, and, it becoming wet, we were completely drenched with rain in the boats, and then set on shore in the midst of a heavy shower. From the landing-place we had nearly a mile to walk to the town ; and such a walk, perhaps, could not have been found in any other country—Holland excepted. From the nature of the road it was almost impossible to maintain ourselves upon our feet for a single step. Fatigued by heat, we had to drag along in the rain, either ankle-deep in mud, or slipping and sliding about upon a wet surface of clay.

We arrived at the town in a sadly drenched and bespattered condition ; but here we found our feet relieved by stepping on a

narrow causeway, paved with small bricks put edgewise into the ground. This was a glad change to our trembling limbs, and now, from requiring less heed to our steps, and the rain ceasing, we had an opportunity of looking round us to observe the general appearance of the town and the country. I could have fancied myself in Holland. The land appeared as one wide flat intersected with dykes and canals—the roads mere banks of mud and clay, thrown from the ditches at their sides—and the houses bedaubed and painted in tawdry colors, like Dutch toys, giving the whole a striking resemblance to the mother country.

The town is simply two long rows of houses, built very distant from each other, with a wide green in the middle, by way of street. It is more than a mile in length, running in a line from the river back to the forest—the most inconvenient form perhaps that could have been contrived, as it throws most of the houses far away from the river, and deprives them of the great advantages, for trade, which they might have had by erecting the houses parallel with the course of the water. To remedy this defect canals and ditches have

been cut, at the backs of the houses, which are perhaps the worst possible neighbours the inhabitants could have near them, for being filled with mud, and all the filthy drainings of the town, and only partially emptied by the reflux of the tide, they become highly offensive, and tend to generate disease. The causeway of bricks is continued throughout the whole length of the town; but the carriage way, like the road we travelled from the fort, is of mere clay and mud.

We could not discover any place bearing the appearance of an inn or hotel, but, two other officers and myself had the good fortune to meet an English settler, in the street, who very kindly conducted us to his house, and, with great hospitality, not only provided us with the means of drying our clothes, and cleaning our persons, but, also, set before us some fine Dutch herrings, with wine, punch, and other refreshments.

After waiting upon the General, at the government house, I lost no time in proceeding upon duty; and, without delay, went out in search of some building to convert into an



hospital, or place of accommodation for our sick. This would have led to a new journey, by way of the wet and slippery road, to the fort ; but, among the happy events of the day, fortune threw me in the path of another gentleman residing in the town, who, upon observing me scrambling through the mud and clay, insisted upon my taking his boat and slaves to convey me to the fort, by way of the river, assuring me that to walk it might be a dangerous excess of fatigue ; and, further, directing his negroes to wait, and bring me back, to his house, to dinner. Perhaps I was little inclined to refuse, but it had been difficult to resist the pressing civility with which the accommodation was offered, accordingly I accepted the boat, and, afterwards, returned and ate of boiled fowl, and a roasted kid. During dinner the friendly invitation was extended to a request, almost amounting to a demand, from both the gentleman and lady of the table, that I would make that house my home so long as the service should require my continuance at Stabroek. Thus has fortune, at once, established me in good quarters in the enemy's country,

without a billet, and even without the trouble of seeking them.

Poor Carrol the surgeon, who accompanied our staff, having been directed to proceed with the troops, who were to have landed previous to the surrender of the fort, is, unhappily, a severe sufferer from long exposure to heat in the boat. After being away upwards of thirty hours he returned to the Grenada, with a very alarming attack of hæmatemesis \*. He left us yesterday morning in strong and florid health, and is, to-day, brought back with a death-like pallor of countenance, and in a state of almost inconceivable debility and exhaustion. A vessel having ruptured in the stomach he vomits up pure blood in surprising quantities.

With a faint and languid, but most penetrating look, he cast his eye up to me, and in a faltering voice expressed himself conscious of the very imminent peril of his situation, assuring me that he was well aware how few hours he *had to live*, and requesting me to take his

\* Vomiting of blood.

pocket-book and money into my possession, and to see that his property was disposed of, after his death, as he had directed. Never perhaps was witnessed a more interesting, or more afflicting scene ! You will form to yourself the best representation of it by placing before your imagination a dead corpse, and fancying its pale lips to move, while its sunk flattened eye turns, feebly, towards you.

But I do not wholly despair of his recovery. Being now placed in an easy and settled position, with the ship quietly at anchor, I am not without the hope that the bleeding and vomiting may cease, in which case he might probably be recovered from the extreme debility occasioned by the great quantity of blood already lost.



## LETTER XI.

*A detachment of the expedition proceeds to Berbische. Scarcity of fresh provisions. Author forestals the market. Purchases a basket of pines. Conduct of the Captain of a French privateer—of another republican citizen. Healthy appearance of the colonists. Demarara not less salubrious than the islands. Country flat, and like Holland. Author visits a coffee plantation. Alluring groves and avenues of fruit trees. Author severely attacked by their keepers. Welcomed by a kind nymph of the grove, and presented with the garden's golden fruit. Meets a slave with a load of oranges. Obtains leave from Mynheer Meertens to gather fruit for the sick soldiers. Events favorable to the gratification of European curiosity. A sale of slaves. Parties of Indians. Author has a slave placed at his elbow during dinner. Is complimented with one at his bedchamber door. Commencement of the wet season. Western hospitality not confined to Barbadoes. Author solicited to purchase a female slave. Remarks of a lady on hearing the cries of a slave under punishment. Prize money.*

Demarara, April 28.

HAVING secure possession of the colony of Essequibo and Demarara, a division of our armament has been detached to the attack of the adjoining settlement of Berbische, which separates us from Surinam.

The whole of the coast not being yet cleared of its wild woods, no regular road is established between the two colonies, although Demarara and Berbische lie contiguous to each other; and hence this, like most of our expeditions, is exposed to all the uncertainties of the wind and the ocean. The troops were embarked on board small sloops and schooners, calculated for the shallow waters of this muddy coast; and it is expected that they will reach Berbische to-morrow evening, or the following morning, the distance between the two great rivers, which give names to the colonies, being but little more than twenty leagues.

We are taught that it will not be possible to procure fresh animal provisions in these colonies, in the quantity necessary for the army: but it is suggested that we may obtain a supply from the Spaniards, who have great numbers of wild cattle, in the island of Trinidad, and upon the neighbouring coast of Oronoko. Vegetables and fruits we find, here, in great plenty. The market, as at Barbadoes, is held on Sunday, and is supplied

by means of what the negroes either grow, or steal.

Being anxious to provide for the sick, in the best way our supply would admit, I became, on Sunday last, quite a forestaller of the market. Taking with me a party of slaves, and of orderlies from the hospital, we went, at an early hour, to the spot where the negroes usually assemble with their loads; and finding that very few had arrived, we walked out to the different roads, leading to the town, and, there, made our purchases in the gross, as we chanced to meet the supplies on their way to the market.

I know not whether you will hold this forestalling and monopoly to be justifiable; but I felt it consistent with my duty to the sick; and if any of those who were well experienced a disappointment at the market, in consequence of it, my consolation was, that they would be much better able to supply themselves, by other means, than the poor suffering objects for whom I had to provide.



Perhaps it is professional, but it has ever been a principle, with me, to exert my first care for those who are in sickness, conscious that those in health will suffer less from occasional deficiency: and the gratification I experience in seeing the poor objects, who are looking up to me, well supplied and contented, reconciles all difficulties, while it assures me that the maxim is correct.

Not having fresh animal provisions, an ample supply of vegetables is, absolutely, necessary to diminish the saltiness of the broths, and messes, which we are compelled to prepare, from barrelled beef and pork, for the sick. Had my purchase, therefore, engrossed every yam and potatoe of the market, feelings of humanity, no less than imperious necessity, would have sanctioned the monopoly.

It will, perhaps, surprize you to learn that, among our marketings, I purchased a large hamper of pines, nearly as heavy as a negro could carry, for, only, the small sum of *three bits*. On counting them over, I found that I had seventeen fine large pines for only fifteen-pence, being somewhat less

than a penny each. I thought to London! and wished I could send you a waggon-load.

I must not omit telling you that, among the vessels lying in the river at the time of our approach, was a French privateer, commanded by a furious revolutionary citizen of the *great Republic—sans-cullottes de la premiere classe*—who, in all the rage of wild democracy, resolved not to strike his flag to the “*Tyrant-English!*” Seeing no possibility of sailing from the harbour, without being taken, he ran his vessel as far as possible up the river, and, there, sunk her. One of our schooners being sent in pursuit of her, found the vessel, with only her masts above water; the crew having gone on shore, in the boat, to seek their escape, through the wild woods, leaving a most insolent and abusive letter in a bottle, tied to the mast-head. This specimen of gasconade, and republican scurrility, began “You d——d inf——l rascals,” and, being continued in low and vulgar abuse, went on to assure us that, on our return to the islands, the brave *Victor Hugues* would “teach us the valour of *true republicans*.”

We are not without the hope of being able to raise the privateer, and make her useful ; and it is extremely doubtful whether her desperate citizen-commander may find it possible to traverse the woods to any place of security. It seems far more probable that he may be compelled to take shelter in some remote part, either of the colony of Demarara, or Berbische ; and that it may, yet, be his fortune to seek the clemency of those whom his folly and temerity have led him so grossly, and unjustly, to revile\*.

In the town of Stabroek, likewise, we found another violent republican, whose rash and revolutionary zeal outran all the bounds of discretion. This was *a citizen* who formerly held a kind of tavern, or public house, in Stabroek : and although he was, entirely, in our power, policy did not lead this man to the concealment, nor even the moderate expression of his mischievous sentiments. He not only avowed, but sought to inculcate the most violent and revolutionary principles ; and although he had much cause of distress, from domestic affliction, he could not

\* He fell into disease, and died before he reached the colony of Surinam.



resist the pleasure of grossly abusing the "*English aristocrats*," and indulging in loud political declamation! His wife had died the very evening the Dutch garrison surrendered, but the colony becoming subject to the "*monarchical English*," was deeper grief to this *modern-feeling*—this *high-patriot* republican, than the loss of his better-self! Next morning the corpse of his deceased wife was carried to a short distance out of the town, and this citizen leveller, without prayer or lamentation, committed the body of his late partner "to . . . . . the crabs." Religion, and even its forms seem to be, here, dispensed with, for they have neither a place of worship, nor of interment. Citizen M— followed his poor unlamented wife to the fields, and there consigned her to a hole in the earth, uttering his grief in loud curses against . . . . . the aristocrats!

A few days since I had an opportunity of dining in company with several of the planters of this colony, who have estates upon the sea-coast; and I could not but remark a striking difference between these gentlemen, and those who, constantly, reside in Stabroek,

or in Bridge-town ; compared to whom they would seem the more robust inhabitants of a temperate climate. Both in countenance and in general stamina, they are very unlike the fallow cachectic-looking subjects of the towns. To find any of the colonists of so strong and healthy appearance, was matter of gratification to me, having been impressed with a contrary expectation, from the very discouraging reports I had heard regarding these settlements.

From all that I had collected upon the subject, I had understood it to be a very generally received opinion at Barbadoes, and the neighbouring islands, that the climate upon the coast of Guiana was, singularly, unhealthy : but the appearance of the gentlemen alluded to is sufficient to rescue it from a prejudice so unwarranted. Judging, indeed, from what I have yet seen, there seems no cause to believe that the air of this coast is fraught with any thing of peculiar insalubrity ; or that it is, in any degree, more noxious than the atmosphere of the islands.

An opportunity has, also, occurred to me of viewing the general face of the colony, by

making a ride of some miles into the country, in an open carriage; but, without attempting to give you a more minute description, at present, I may, simply, confirm the remark I made at our first coming on shore—that the whole of the land is one wide-extended plain, thickly covered with cotton-bushes, and every where intersected, with ditches and canals, like the low territory of Holland.

I have, likewise, made a visit of curiosity to a coffee plantation, near the town, where I saw an extensive display of the riches and luxuriancy of the soil of Guiana. This estate differs from the wide fields upon the coast, only in being a flat surface of coffee, instead of cotton; but it is rendered rich and inviting, from being traversed with green walks, shaded with fine rows of trees, whose loaded branches bend under the various species of tropical fruits, serving, at the same time, to delight the eye, regale the olfactories, and refresh the palate. A pleasant path, more than a mile in length, and of sufficient width for carriages, leads down the middle of the estate, the sides being decorated with mangoes, oranges, avagata pears, and many other kinds of fruit.



Crossing this walk, near the centre, is a thick grove of many hundreds of orange trees, clad in all the variety of umbrageous foliage, fragrant blossoms, unripe *green* and ripe *golden* fruit.

In the genial climate of Europe, under the mild sun and soft breezes of England, how delightful would be fields or gardens thus planted, and how gratefully—how exquisitely enjoyed! But, here, under the scorchings of a torrid sun, while the eye, and the olfactories, and the palate are regaled, the tortured sense of feeling precludes every possibility of enjoyment. If exposed to the open sun, the excess of heat produces insupportable languor and fatigue—and if you seek the protecting shade of the fruit trees, you are, there, tormented with the sharp bitings of myriads of musquitoes.

Invited by the grateful odour, and thinking to enjoy the cool shade, I left the broad and heated path, to ramble in the sweet avenues of the orange grove, but ere my foot had traced its second step in the cool grass, I was beset by the thousand stings of hostile

keepers, scarcely less fierce or less watchful, than the sleepless guardian of the delicious fruits of the Hesperides; and, it requiring more than the power of Hercules to subdue them, I soon discovered that my best remedy was a hasty retreat.

In my escape I experienced more courteous fare; for, upon turning from the grove, a gentle nymph, who had espied me from the mansion, approached, in graceful step, to bid me welcome; nor did she withhold, like the Hesperian maids, the garden's golden produce; but, kindly, presented me with its sweetest, choicest fruits. In plain terms a very fine mulatto woman of the house, seeing me walking, and observing me to be a stranger, came out, with a plate of the sweetest oranges of the grove, and, inviting me to eat, with much gracefulness and urbanity, kindly bade me welcome.

Presently afterwards I met a robust negro carrying a heavy basket of fruit upon his head, and asking him how they disposed of the immense numbers of oranges growing upon the estate, he replied "gib 'em to de

neighbours, Massa." My mind, again, hurried to my friends in England, and I wished I could convey to you a dozen chests as fresh, and as fragrant as they were, then, before my eye. Although in this wish I could not hope to be gratified, it occurred to me, that to many of my countrymen, not so far distant, they might prove highly grateful and refreshing; therefore, availing myself of the information, I wrote to Mynheer Meertens—the attorney of the estate, and have obtained permission to gather baskets of oranges for the sick soldiers, whenever I please. To have had this the result of my walk, I could have extended it to the extremest depth of the grove, although the sanguinary musquitoes had intoxicated themselves with deep draughts from my veins.

I should feel it an unworthy omission not to give you a copy of Mynheer Meerten's obliging note to the manager, after reading my request. It was as follows: "Monfr. Keller, à l'habitation Vleffingen aura la bonté de procurer, de tems en tems, pour les militaires qui sont malades, les fruits tels qu'ils s'y trouvent. Il obligera, son très humble serviteur.

A. MEERTENS."



During the few days, since our arrival here, events and circumstances have occurred, as if they had been planned for the gratification of our curiosity, or designed expressly to place before us what was likely to be most striking to Europeans.

Already have we witnessed the humiliating, but very interesting sight of a cargo of several hundreds of human subjects being landed from a slave-ship, and exposed to public sale; and on the other hand, naked beings, who range in the utmost freedom of human nature, have presented themselves in crowds to our observation—parties of copper-coloured Indians, from the wild woods, having come down the river in their canoes to visit the town. It has also chanced to occur to me to be addressed by an unhappy slave, strongly entreating me to purchase her from her master; and I have further witnessed with surprise, the more than apathy, perhaps I might say, the exultation of a white lady, on hearing the cries of a negro suffering under the whip. Likewise the honor has been done me of having a young slave placed by my elbow at dinner time, with a fragrant bough to defend me from

the flies ; and I have been complimented with a negro to sleep at my bed-room door, in order to be in readiness—in case I should require him to beat off the musquitoes, or to bring me any thing in the night.

It proves that we are here just in time to witness the setting in of the rainy season ; it having announced itself by the falling of heavy showers almost every morning since our landing : and, amidst all the other *delights* and novelties of this moment, I must not forget to note, to you, that I now experience the fiery sensation of having my whole skin thickly beset with prickly heat.

We find that the Western code of hospitality, so prominent at Barbadoes, is not confined to that island. It extends equally to the coast of South America. The planters, whom I have had the pleasure to meet at Stabroek, have invited me, in the most cordial manner, to their several homes, offering me every accommodation at their plantations in the country, whenever I may find time to visit them.

Inclination strongly impels me to avail myself of so pleasant a method of seeing, and acquiring a knowledge of the colony ; but, at present, the calls of duty are too urgent to allow the absence of a single day ; and as it is intended that I shall return with the General, to head quarters, in order to proceed to St. Domingo, I shall probably have to lament the impossibility of embracing the occasion offered to me of better knowing Demarara, and its hospitable inhabitants.

I should tell you that the poor unhappy slave, who came to me to entreat, that I would purchase her, was a very decent young woman, here termed a “house-wench\*.” The hardships and ill treatment she had suffered, had created, she said, such an entire dislike to her present home, that if she could find no “*good Massa*” who would buy her, she had resolved to try and escape from her misery by running away. The poor creature shuddered as she mentioned this expedient, sensible that if she should be retaken, her sufferings, great as they were, would be sadly multiplied. Still she declared she was firmly resolved to hazard

\* A domestic slave—not sent to work in the fields.



the attempt, rather than continue her present wretched life, hopeless of relief.

She wept as she spake, and the heavy tear swelled on her ebon cheek as she related the severities to which she had been subjected. Her tale was at once interesting and distressful. It needed not the aid of eloquence to move compassion. The simple narration of the hardships imposed, and the punishment inflicted for only trivial faults, instantly reached the feelings, and in strong appeal begat a new regret that whole hosts of human creatures, for the of lucre a few of their fellow-beings, differing only in the colour of their skin, should be degraded to a situation, which not only deprives them of the command of their persons, but, also, robs them of all the powers of will.

Divested of every right, a slave has no redress,—not even against the bitterest wrongs : however oppressed—however injured he has no resource—no means of relief ! Not having the power of changing his home, he has no escape from ill usage or cruelty ; but is con-

demned to travel the long journey of life in hopelefs discontent.

The corporal punishment of flaves is fo frequent, that inftead of exciting the repugnant fenfations, felt by Europeans on firft witneffing it, fcarcely does it produce, in the breasts of thofe long accuftomed to the Weft Indies, even the flighteft feeling of compaffion. The lady I have above alluded to appears of good natural difpofition, and in no degree difpofed to general cruelty ; but the frequency of the fight has rendered her callous to its common influence upon the feelings. Being one morning at her houfe, while fitting in converfation, we fuddenly heard the loud cries of a negro fuffering under the whip. Mrs. —— expreffed furprize on obferving me fhudder at his fhrieks, and you will believe that I was in utter aftonifhment to find her treat his fufferings as matter of amufement. It proved that the punishment proceeded from the arm of the lady's hufband, and fell upon one of her own flaves ; and, can you believe that on learning this, ſhe exclaimed with a broad fmile, “ Aha ! it will do him good ! a little wholefome flagel-

lation will refresh him.—It will sober him.—It will open his skin, and make him alert. If Y— was to give it them all, it would be of service to them !”

I could not compliment the lady upon her humanity. The loud clang of the whip continued, and the poor imploring negro as loudly cried “ *Oh Massa, Massa—God a’mighty—God bless you Massa ! I beg you pardon ! Oh ! Massa, Oh ! I beg you pardon ! Oh ! God a’mighty—God bless you !* ”—Still the whip sounded aloud, and still the lady cried “ Aye, it’s very necessary !”

Presently I learned that this unfortunate slave was punished for drunkenness, having become intoxicated, in consequence of his mistress treating him with money to buy rum. I could not but remark that in such case it doubly became her to petition her husband, in behalf of the poor man ; observing, that at all events, it must be quite useless to punish him, while he was in a state not to be sensible of the crime. To this the *tender* lady replied, —“ Aye but if Y— was to spare him till morning he wouldn’t *give it* him then !”



Such is the effect of habit in subduing even our most amiable feelings. Could this lady have known how much her remarks deformed her, policy had, no doubt, led to a different expression, although humanity had not taught, nor habit allowed her to feel a different sentiment !

Let me ask you, my friend, what you would say were you to see me return home as rich as a West India planter, or an Eastern Nabob ? Know that sanguine whisper fondly augments the value of our captured property to upwards of £200,000 ! What if I should chance to share to a weighty amount, and, in the event of our proceeding to new conquests, return to my friends with . . . . . a *Benjamin sack* ! We hear of various ships, of extensive stores, of large estates, and of whole gangs of slaves, all public property, to be confiscated for the benefit of the *captors*. Knowing with what *facility* prize money finds its way into the soldier's pocket, you will smile at the riches of your friend, thus acquired ; and, perhaps, would deem it a hazardous speculation to offer a £5 note for my whole share of profits. Still, being here, in the direction of a depart-

ment, I am really told, that I ought to calculate upon receiving a sum by no means despicable. My expectations, however, do not run very high, being aware of the close meltings, which such kind of property usually undergoes, before it becomes sufficiently refined for the pockets of the captors \*.

\* It proved that considerable property was actually condemned and sold ; but not the smallest dividend has yet been paid to those entitled to it. . . . . January 1806.

## LETTER XII.

*Barbadoes the metropolis of the West Indies. News, letters, and tidings of the army reach Guiana, viâ, Barbadoes. Great body of the armament sails from Carlisle bay. Sir Hugh Christian arrives at Barbadoes. Colony of Berbische surrenders to the English. Roads of mud and clay. Dutch cuisine better than the English. Dutch devoted to the pleasures of the table. Slaves sent to cut grass for sale. Punishment of a slave. Author and a party make an excursion to Mr. Osborn's. Visit to Mr. Dougan's. Happy condition of Mr. Dougan's slaves: — of Mr. Osborn's. Negroes in the West Indies sit round a fire in the evening. Mosquitoes and fire flies.*

Stabroek, May, 6.

PREVIOUS to giving you the intelligence which reaches us at this place, it were fit to inform you that the island of Barbadoes is now become, as it were, the London of the West Indies—the great capital to which we anxiously look for events, and for news. Removed to a greater distance from you, and without any direct communication, we seem dependent upon this sub-metropolis; and we learn



the tidings of England, of Europe, of the West India Islands, and of the great body of our army, only as conveyed to us, indirectly, viâ Barbadoes.

Two vessels have arrived from thence, and by these we learn that the Commander in chief, and the troops did not sail until the 21st of April, being six days after the time we left Barbadoes. It was not publicly known whether they had gone against Guadaloupe, or St. Lucie; but, from all the circumstances of the armament, it seems now to be the current opinion that Guadaloupe is not likely to be attacked during this campaign.

We are told that Admiral Christian arrived just before the troops sailed from Barbadoes, bringing with him twenty-seven sail of vessels, the remnant of the immense fleet with which he originally sailed, in the month of November; and it now appears that the ships which were in sight off Carlisle bay, at the time we left it, were only a division of the convoy, and that the Admiral did not reach Barbadoes until some time after.

We hear that the colony of Berbische has surrendered to the troops detached from hence; but the intelligence is not yet officially confirmed.

You will not envy our walks in the neighbourhood of Stabroek, when I tell you that the wet season is now completely set in, and that, from the whole soil being of pure mud and clay, we can scarcely move a step from the door without being ankle-deep. Such roads surely were never seen; and, not yet having an opportunity of purchasing a horse, I am daily compelled, either to walk up to mid-leg in wet clay, or to drag my limbs through a path still deeper in mud.

Can you believe that, when dining a few days since with a party of gentlemen, at Stabroek, I should have heard it asserted that we had nothing good in England but - - - - beef! It was the opinion of a Dutchman; and I felt some surprize, on hearing several of my countrymen add, that the Dutch have certainly a better knowledge of the good things of the table, possess more of them, prepare them better, and are more devoted to the pleasures of the board

than the English. I wished for some of our gouty friends, or our generous and portly citizens of London, to debate the question. The palm had not then, perhaps, been tacitly surrendered. More of stews and hashes they may have, but it were difficult to convince an Englishman that they have better food, or fonder stomachs \*.

Something of novelty—scenes and events different from all we have been accustomed to in Europe, occur almost daily to our observation; but I am afraid of falling into a tedious tautology by detailing them to you as they chance to arise: yet I like to give you them as they occur; for, should I wait to compress them under regular and appropriate heads, you might never have them at all; or they might be divested of the only merit they possess—that of being fresh from the immediate feelings of a first impression: I,

\* The author is assured by a friend, who has long resided among the Dutch, that the citizens of Amsterdam are more pampered than those of London—that they bestow more attention respecting the preparation of their food—that good eating and good cooking are more studied, and that the making of seasoned dishes is more a business among the Hollanders.



therefore, proceed in my own way to tell you that, since the date of my last letter, I have been witness to a gentleman calling up one of his slaves, into the breakfast room, and giving him orders to go with three others into the fields, the high-ways, or the woods, and cut grafs, to sell in the town, charging him to recollect that it was at the pain of a "good flogging" if they did not each bring him home four bits \* at night, and adding, by way of encouragement, that, if they could gain more, they might keep the surplus for themselves. They went out, each taking a long knife and a string, and returned, punctually, in the evening with the sixteen bits.

Unfortunately I am now enabled to speak of the punishment of a slave, which was far more severe than that mentioned in my last letter ; and, I am sorry to add, attended with similar marks of insensibility, and want of feeling, on the part of a white female. Happening to call one morning upon a lady at Stabroek, in company with several Europeans who had been my fellow-passengers hither,

\* About 1s. 8d. sterling.

we were scarcely seated before we heard the bleeding clang of the whip, and the painful cries of a poor unfortunate black. The lady of the house, more accustomed to scenes of slavery than ourselves, pointing to the spot, as if it were a pleasant sight for strangers, or something that might divert us, asked, with apparent glee, if we saw them "*flogging the negre*?" Truly we saw the whole too clearly. A poor unhappy slave was stretched out naked, upon the open street, tied down with his face to the ground before the fiscal's door, his two legs extended to one stake, his arms strained out, at full length, to two others in form of the letter Y, and, thus secured to the earth, two strong-armed drivers \*, placed at his sides, were cutting his bare skin, by turns, with long heavy-lashed whips, which, from the sound, alone, without seeing the blood that followed, conveyed the idea of tearing away pieces of flesh at every stroke.

Consistent with the freedom, and im-

\* Slaves so termed from being promoted to the distinguished office of following their comrades, upon all occasions, with a whip at their backs, as an English carter follows his horses.

partiality I have always observed in offering you my “notes,” I am extremely happy to be able to relieve you from this painful scene, by presenting to you one of a very opposite nature—one in which I am sure every feeling of your heart will warmly participate. A party of recently arrived Europeans went by invitation to dine at “Arcadia”—the plantation of a Mr. Osborn, about eight miles from Stabroek. Five slaves were sent, with a handsome covered boat to fetch us, in which we had a most pleasant sail, about six miles up the river, and, then, coming into a canal, which led to the estate, we were drawn about two miles further, by the negroes running at the side of the canal, singing all the way, and pulling, in merry tune, together. On our arrival at Mr. Osborn’s, we were presented with wine, fruits, and various refreshments; and, afterwards, were amused till dinner-time in viewing the coffee plantation, the negro yard, and the different premises. At dinner we shared all the good things of the colony, and, in the afternoon, were conducted across the canal to visit the estate, and happy home of Mr. Dougan, a neighbour whom Mr. Osborn had invited to meet us.—Here we found a rich sugar



plantation bordered with coffee and fruits. Leading to the sugar fields, were fine rows of fruit trees, laden with oranges, forbidden fruit, shaddocks, and citrons—the shaddocks and forbidden fruit very superior to any I had before tasted, indeed so exquisite, that perhaps I might say they were the finest species of the two finest fruits produced in the whole garden of nature.

I cannot express to you how much we were gratified—how peculiarly we were delighted with all we saw at this happy abode of Mr. Dougan. The plantation is laid out with much taste, and having every advantage of culture, it exhibits, in high perfection, all the luxuriance of a rich tropical estate. Utility, pleasure, and convenience, are here most happily combined. A private canal leads through the middle of the grounds, and serves, at once, for ornament and pleasure, as well as for bringing home the copious harvests of coffee and sugar.

At its sides are smooth walks of grass; and between these and the sugar canes are borders planted with all the choice tropical fruits,

rendering a promenade upon the water, or its banks, most fragrant and inviting, and offering to the eye and the palate all the variety of oranges, shaddocks, limes, lemons, cherries, custard apples, cashew apples, avagata pears, grenadilloes, water-lemons, mangoes, and pines. The other walks, which traverse the plantation, are also cool and fragrant avenues of fruit trees.

But however great the richness, beauty, and fragrance of the estate, its canals, and its walks, still I am sensible that I shall more firmly secure your attachment to it, by mentioning the simple fact that, to slavery, it affords . . . . . a happy home !

I know not whether, upon any occasion, since my departure from England, I have experienced such true and heart-felt pleasure as in witnessing the high degree of comfort and happiness enjoyed by the slaves of "Profit." Mr. Dougan not only grants them many little indulgences, and studies to make them happy, but he generously fosters them with a father's care ; and they, sensible of his tenderness towards them, look

to their revered master as a kind and affectionate parent ; and with undivided—unsophisticated attachment cheerfully devote, to him, their labour and their lives.

Not satisfied with bestowing upon his slaves mere food and raiment, Mr. Dougan establishes for them a kind of right. He assures to them certain property, endeavors to excite feelings of emulation among them, and to inspire them with a spirit of neatness and order, not commonly known among slaves : and I am happy to add that the effects of his friendly attentions, towards them, are strongly manifested in their persons, their dwellings, and their general demeanour.—Perhaps it were not too much to say, that the negro yard at “Profit” forms one of the happiest villages within the wide circle of the globe ! The labouring poor of Europe can attain to no state at all adequate to such slavery, for had they equal comforts, still could they never be equally free from care.

The slaves of Mr. Dougan are not only fed, and clothed, and tenderly watched in sickness, without any personal thought, or con-



cern, but each has his appropriate spot of ground, and his cottage, in which he feels a right as sacred as if secured to him by all the seals and parchments of the Lord High Chancellor of England, and his court.

Happy and contented, the slave of "Profit" sees all his wants supplied. Having never been in a state of freedom, he has no desire for it. Not having known liberty, he feels not the privation of it; nor is it within the powers of his mind either to conceive or comprehend the sense we attach to the term. Were freedom offered to him he would refuse to accept it, and would only view it as a state fraught with certain difficulties and vexations, but offering no commensurate good. "Who gib me for gnyhaam Massa," he asks "if me free?" "Who gib me clothes!" "Who send me doctor when me sick?"

With industry a slave has no acquaintance, nor has he any knowledge of the kind of comfort and independence which derive from it. Ambition has not taught him that, in freedom, he might escape from poverty—nor has he any conception that by improving

his intellect he might become of higher importance in the scale of humanity. Thus circumstanced, to remove him from the quiet and contentment of such a bondage, and to place him amidst the tumults and vicissitudes of freedom, were but to impose upon him the exchange of great comparative happiness, for much of positive misery and distress.

From what has been said you will perceive that to do justice to the merit of Mr. Dougan, would require a far more able pen. His humane and liberal conduct does him infinite honor; while the richness of the estate and the happiness of the slaves loudly proclaim his attentive concern. We were pleased with all around us, but to witness so happy a state of slavery gave us peculiar delight.

The cottages and little gardens of the negroes exhibited a degree of neatness, and of plenty, that might be envied by free-born Britons, not of the poorest class. The huts of Ireland, Scotland, France, Germany, nay, many, even of England itself, bear no comparison with these. In impulsive delight I

ran into many of them, surprizing the slaves with an unexpected visit, and, verily, I say the peasantry of Europe might envy these dwellings of slavery. They mostly consist of a comfortable sitting room, and a neat, well-furnished bed room. In one I observed a high bedstead, according to the present European fashion, with deep mattresses, all neatly made up, and covered with a clean white counterpane; the bed-posts, drawers, and chairs bearing the high polish of well-rubbed mahogany. I felt a desire to pillow my head in this hut for the night, it not having fallen to my lot, since I left England, to repose on so inviting a couch. The value of the whole was tenfold augmented by the contented slaves being able to say—"all this we feel to be our own."

Too often in regarding the countenance of a slave, it may be observed that

" Dark melancholy sits, and round her throws  
A death-like silence, and a dread repose."

but throughout Mr. Dougan's happy gang the more striking features are those of mirth and glee; for, here, the merry dance and jovial



long prevail, and all are votaries to joy and harmony.

Before the doors of the huts, and around these peaceful dwellings were seen great numbers of pigs, and poultry, which the slaves are allowed to raise for their own profit; and from the stock, thus bred in the negro yard, the master usually purchases the provisions of his table, paying to the negroes the common price for which they would sell at the market.

The conduct of Mr. Osborn to his slaves, and, indeed, of many others I might mention, is also very highly commendable. The negroes at Arcadia have much cause of contentment; their happiness and welfare being guarded with a parental care. Were all masters kind and humane as Mr. Dougan, and his neighbour, slavery might have few enemies; and the peasants of Europe, amidst their boasted freedom, might sigh, in vain, for the happiness enjoyed——by slaves!

As we were leaving Mr. Osborn's, in the evening, we saw a numerous party of his *gang* grouped upon their haunches round

a large fire, seeming to enjoy it as if it relieved them from freezing cold. Remarking upon the singularity of this, with the thermometer at nearly  $80^{\circ}$ , it was observed to us that they required it for roasting their plantains, stewing their pepper-pot, and preparing their other little messes for supper; and, moreover, that the negroes were always chilly in the evening, and would be quite comfortless without a fire.

Owing to the tide being out, at the time we returned, there was not sufficient water in the canal to admit of our going down in the boat, we, therefore, were compelled to walk nearly two miles before we embarked. During this walk, we were in danger of being devoured by those annoying insects the musquitoes, which attacked us in such daring hosts that we were obliged to walk with small boughs in our hands, and to continue, the whole time, beating them from our legs and faces.

The fire flies were, scarcely, less numerous than the musquitoes; but, although we were annoyed by their flying against us, we suffered no pain from them. They neither tormented

us with bites, nor stings—but in such myriads did they dart and play about us that we appeared to be moving in an atmosphere of twinkling stars. One piece of coffee, in particular, had its whole surface so illumined by these insects, as to convey the idea of the field being spread with a sheet of fire. After we went into the boat, and had proceeded towards the middle of the river, both fire flies and musquitoes forsook us; and we were, pleasantly rowed down to the town by four of Mr. Osborn's contented slaves.



## LETTER XIII.

*Terms of capitulation of the colonies on the coast of Guiana. Dutch soldiers enter into the British service. South American Rangers. Situation of the captured colonies. Beef brought from the Spanish woods. Generosity of some of the planters towards the sick soldiers. Troops on board ship a great annoyance to the captain and his crew. The Grenada returns to England. Mr. Porter and family passengers. A sale of slaves. Scarcity of mechanics. Extravagant wages of labour. Case of yellow fever. Impropriety of the term "yellow fever."*

Stabroek, May 8.

CONSISTENT with the order of narrative you wish me to observe in offering you my notes, I may now tell you that the general, and part of the detachment that accompanied him, are returned to Demarara, leaving the 93d regiment, in garrison, at Berbische—that colony having capitulated upon the same terms as Essequibo and Demarara. The commerce of the colonies is to be directed to the ports of England; in return for which she offers them protection and defence. All that concerns the military proceedings is to rest with the English; but, in all that regards the civil

administration, the colonies are to preserve the established laws and form of government, until the end of the war; and the present Dutch governors are not to be removed.

Under these conditions most of the Dutch soldiers, who were in garrison, have consented to enlist into our service, and to act conjointly with our troops in defence of the colonies. We thus acquire the aid of a corps well seasoned to the country, in good discipline, and ready, at all moments, to act in concert for the general benefit of the settlements.

It is likewise intended to strengthen the garrison by forming a corps of negroes to be called “The South American Rangers.” This will be a valuable addition to our force, as these men are not subject to the debilitating effects of climate, but are most active in the greatest heat; and are capable of supporting the most fatiguing duties under the direct rays of a vertical sun.

The Dutch colony of Surinam borders Berbische, on our right, and a little further up the coast is the French colony of Cayenne.

With such restless neighbours about us, we shall require to be watchful and alert. On our left we approach the river Oronoko, and what is termed the Spanish main : and not far from the coast of Essequibo is the Spanish island of Trinidad. From this quarter we hope to procure beef—from the other we expect only blows.

A communication is to be opened directly with the Spaniards, in order to negotiate the purchase of cattle from the woods—which, we are told, they will be glad to sell at six or seven dollars per head.

We are now very much in want of fresh animal provisions ; for, since the time of our arrival, I have only been able to purchase two or three small sheep, for the use of the hospital. But, as the guardian of the sick, I owe much gratitude to the gentlemen of the colony, for some liberal presents of beef and mutton, which their humanity has induced them to send to the hospital for the comfort of the suffering soldiers. Two neighbouring gentlemen, in particular—Mr. T. Cuming, and Mr. Waterton have the prayers of the sick, and the best acknowledgments of their



attendants. Occasionally they have sent us an ox, or a sheep; or have shared, with the sick, the best provisions of their table.

Fruits are given to us from various estates, not only by gallons and bushels, but by cart-loads and boat-loads, at a time; and, by these generous aids, we have been able to improve the comforts of the sick, beyond all that money could have obtained.

Until the 28th of April we continued to have a sick-ward on board the Grenada; but we have now, to the great joy of Captain Richardson, taken the whole of the men on shore, and placed them in hospital, at an estate called La Bourgade.

Mr. Richardson is a good sailor, and, moreover, a very respectable man, and of more improved manners than many of his colleagues. He is not only captain of the ship, but has also a share as owner. He frankly tells us how much he is rejoiced to have done with us, and assures us that his ship shall never, again, while he commands her, be incommoded with such a troublesome crowd. I

can feel what a sad annoyance it must be to the master of a vessel to be driven out of his cabin to seek a birth in any hole or corner he can find, and to have his ship stowed, for many weeks, with an useless and helpless throng, who, every moment, interrupt the working of the vessel, and are, perpetually, in the way of the tiller and the ropes.

Being now released, the Grenada proceeds to take in a cargo of cotton or sugar, in order to return with all speed to England. Her cabin is already engaged by a Mr. Porter, who is about to quit the fatigues of a tropical world, and to retire to Europe with his family. This gentleman was one of the earliest planters who ventured to direct his labours to the cultivation of the sea coast, instead of the banks of the river, and who has turned his industry to a profitable account; his well-merited success enabling him to return to England possessed of a very large fortune.

A few days ago I had the opportunity of being present at a more regular sale, or market of slaves than I had seen before, and here I witnessed all the heart-rending distress attend-

ant upon such a scene. I saw numbers of our fellow beings regularly bartered for gold, and transferred, like cattle, or any common merchandise, from one possessor to another. It was a sight which European curiosity had rendered me desirous to behold, although I had anticipated from it only a painful gratification. I may now say—*I have seen it!*—and while nature animates my breast with even the feeblest spark of humanity, I can never forget it!

The poor Africans, who were to be sold, were exposed, naked, in a large empty building, like an open barn. Those, who came, with intention to purchase, minutely inspected them; handled them; made them jump, and stamp with their feet, and throw out their arms and their legs; turned them about; looked into their mouths; and, according to the usual rules of traffic with respect to cattle, examined them, and made them shew themselves in a variety of ways, to try if they were sound and healthy. All this was distressful as humiliating, and tended to excite strong aversion and disgust; but a wound, still more severe, was inflicted on the feelings, by some of the purchasers selecting only such as their judgment



led them to prefer, regardless of the bonds of nature, and affection ! The urgent appeals of friendship and attachment were unheeded ; sighs and tears made no impression ; and all the imploring looks, and penetrating expressions of grief were unavailing. Hungry commerce corroded even the golden chains of affection ; and sordid interest burst every tie of nature asunder. The husband was taken from the wife, children separated from their parents, and the lover torn from his mistress :—the companion was bought away from his friend, and the brother not suffered to accompany the sister.

In one part of the building was seen a wife clinging to her husband, and beseeching, in the strongest eloquence of nature, not to be left behind him. Here was a sister hanging upon the neck of her brother, and, with tears, entreating to be led to the same home of captivity. There stood two brothers, enfolded in each others arms, mutually bewailing their threatened separation. In other parts were friends, relatives, and companions, praying to be sold to the same master—using signs to signify that they would be

content with slavery, might they but toil together.

Silent tears, deep sighs, and heavy lamentations bespoke the universal suffering of these poor blacks, and proved that nature was ever true to her feelings. Never was scene more distressful. Among these unhappy, degraded Africans scarcely was there an unclouded countenance. Every feature was veiled in the silent gloom of woe; and sorrowing nature poured forth in all the bitterness of affliction.

A whole host of painful ideas rushed into my mind at the moment. In sad contemplation all the distorted images of this abhorrent traffic presented themselves to my recollection. The many horrors and cruelties, I had so often heard of, appeared in their worst shape before me; and my imagination was acutely alive to the unmerited punishment sometimes inflicted—the incessant labour exacted—the want of freedom—and all the catalogue of hardships endured by slaves. I endeavored to combat the effect of these impressions by attaching my mind to opposite images. The

kind treatment of negroes under humane masters occurred to me ; I recollected the comfort and harmony of the slaves I had lately seen at " Profit." I contemplated their freedom from care, and the many anxieties of the world ; and I remembered the happiness and contentment expressed in their songs and merry dances : but—all in vain ! The repugnant influence would not thus be cheated. With such distress, before my eyes, all palliatives were unavailing. The whole was wrong, and not to be justified. I felt that I execrated every principle of the traffic. Nature revolted at it ; and I condemned the whole system of slavery under all its forms and modifications.

When purchased, the slaves were marked by placing a bit of string, or of red or white tape round their arms or necks. One gentleman, who bought a considerable number of them, was proceeding to distinguish those he had selected, by tying a bit of red tape round the neck, when I observed two negroes, who were standing together entwined in each others arms, watch him with great anxiety. Presently he approached them, and after making



his examination affixed the mark only to one of them. The other, with a look of unerring expression, and, with an impulse of marked disappointment, cast his eyes up to the purchaser seeming to say—"and will you not have me too?"—then jumped, and danced, and stamped with his feet, and made other signs to signify that he, also, was sound and strong, and worthy his choice. He was, nevertheless, passed by unregarded; upon which he turned, again, to his companion, his friend, brother, whichever he was, took him to his bosom, hung upon him, and, in sorrowful countenance expressed the strongest marks of disappointment and affliction. The feeling was mutual:—it arose from reciprocal affection. His friend participated in his grief, and they both wept bitterly. Soon afterwards on looking round to complete his purchase the planter, again, passed that way, and not finding any one that better suited his purpose, he, now, hung the token of choice round the neck of the negro whom he had before disregarded. All the powers of art could not have effected the change that followed. More genuine joy was never expressed. His countenance became enlivened.

Grief and sadness vanished, and flying into the arms of his friend, he caressed him with warm embraces, then skipped, and jumped, and danced about, exhibiting all the purest signs of mirth and gratification. His companion, not less delighted, received him with reciprocal feelings—and a more pure and native sympathy was never exhibited. Happy in being, again, associated, they now retired apart from the crowd, and sat down, in quiet contentment, hugging and kissing the red signal of bondage, like two attached and affectionate brothers—satisfied to toil out their days, for an unknown master, so they might but travel their journey of slavery together.

In the afternoon of the same day I chanced to be present when another gentleman came to purchase some of the slaves, who were not sold in the morning. After looking through the lot he remarked that he did not see any who were of pleasant countenance; and going on to make further objections, respecting their appearance, he was interrupted by the vendor who remarked that at that moment they were seen to great disadvantage, as they looked worse “*from having*

*left their friends and associates in the morning.*" Aye! truly, I could have replied—a very powerful reason why they are unfit for sale this afternoon! If to be of smiling countenance were necessary to their being sold, it were politic not to expose them for long to come. Still, some were selected, and the mark of purchase being made, the distressful scene of the morning was, in a degree, repeated.

A few of the most ill-looking, only, now remained, who were meager, and of rough skin—not thoroughly black, but of a yellowish, or dirty brown color—of hungry, unhealthy aspect, feeble, of hideous countenance, and in general appearance scarcely human. These remained to a future day, and would, probably, be sold, not to the planters, but to the boat-women, tailors, hucksters, or some of the inferior mechanics, or shopkeepers of the town, at a price somewhat lower than that demanded for the more robust, and well-looking; and, alas! though least able to bear fatigue, these feeble beings would, most likely, be subjected to a far more heavy slavery than those of stronger frame, for it is, commonly, seen that the labour



exacted by the poorer orders of people, from their few and weakly slaves, is more severe than that required by the opulent planter from his regular, and better-appointed gang: although, *in theory*, the circumstance of being always under the eye of the master, instead of being left to the mercy of a hireling, would seem to be an advantage much in favor of the slaves of those owners, who possess but few.

You will not be surprised that we should find it extremely difficult to procure a sufficient number of workmen and labourers, in this colony, for the services required. Although the wages of labour are extravagantly high, an extraordinary number of hands for any emergency cannot be obtained, without having recourse to a system of coercion. The work required to be done at the fort in constructing new batteries, and improving our means of defence, being urgent and extensive, it is found necessary to detain the mechanics, who are employed, by very close watching; otherwise, although they are exorbitantly paid, they could not be relied upon for a single day. It has been found necessary to procure the mere

labourers by requisition—a certain number of negroes being demanded, for a given number of days, from every gang in the colony.

We feel the effect of this scarcity of workmen, very much, at the hospital, for after using every exertion of which I am capable, I have to lament that we do not yet see the accommodations, for the sick, so complete as I had hoped. As a great indulgence I have now obtained a party of six carpenters to be employed, exclusively, at the hospital, until they shall have finished such repairs and alterations as are required. But the claims of every department, and almost every individual, upon this class of workmen, are so numerous and pressing, that I quite despair of confining them to the work of the hospital, for any two days together.

It is with real sorrow and affliction that I find myself enabled to inform you of our being likely to become acquainted with that merciless yellow fury who has, of late years, so frightfully ravaged the West India colonies; and regarding whom so much of dread and alarm prevails in Europe.

A few days since a soldier was seized by this hungry devourer, and, in despite of all our efforts to rescue him, he fell a sacrifice to her insatiate thirst for European blood.

This was the first patient admitted into the hospital with the direful malady of the country, called "yellow fever," and it had afforded us peculiar satisfaction had we been happy enough to have saved him : but the disease had made great progress before he was brought to us, and he died on the 6th day after his admission.

The body was examined, with a view to ascertain the changes produced by the disease, but the appearances were not precisely such, as from conversing with other practitioners, and reading a variety of authors, we had been led to expect. The stomach was found to be the organ which exhibited the strongest marks of derangement. The inner coat was surcharged with blood, appearing very red, and at one spot near the upper orifice it was of a livid hue, and its texture so weakened, that the finger was passed through it, by only a slight pressure. I sincerely hope



that frequent opportunities may not occur, but if, unhappily, they should we shall avail ourselves of them, in the hope of ascertaining, correctly what are the diseased appearances caused in the different viscera by this fatal malady.

The name commonly given to this disorder would seem to be highly inaccurate. Our patient, although several days ill, had no yellowness of the skin, until a few hours before he died. If, therefore, his dissolution had occurred only a short time sooner; or if he had recovered previous to the period when this change of colour took place, we could not with any correctness have called the fever he had suffered a *yellow* fever, although he had undergone all the characteristic symptoms of the disease, so termed, except the casual one from which it has been improperly named. Moreover, affixing to a disease a name derived from a symptom, and particularly a symptom which is not always present, is calculated to deceive, and may be of dangerous tendency, by rendering the practitioner unsuspecting of the real nature of the disorder, until it is too late to check its destructive progress.

## LETTER XIV.

*The author is left in the colonies of Guiana, instead of proceeding to St. Domingo. Regimental medical staff employed in general hospital. General Whyte attentive to the sick. The hospital and quarters for the medical officers established at La Bourgade. Author annoyed by insects. Tendernefs of a Gentleman towards a musquito. Author makes a sauntering ramble to "the bush." His contemplations on being arrested by deep and impenetrable woods. A lady solicits the Author to make a complaint against her slaves.*

Demarara May 12.

I HAVE already troubled you with too many specimens of the uncertainties attaching to my present mode of life, for you to feel surprize at any new instance I may have to relate. Know then that I have experienced a sad disappointment, in having to make my congé to the General, on his return to the islands; and, after all my expectations of being soon at St. Domingo, am left behind with instructions to continue in the direction of the medical department of these colonies, until our detachment of the St. Domingo hospital staff, shall

be relieved from the staff of the Charibbee Islands.

Instead of my being permitted to proceed with the General to head quarters, it is found requisite that the detachment of the hospital staff, serving here, should be augmented. I have made out a return of the medical establishment, which seems necessary for these colonies, and still hope that we may soon be relieved, and allowed to proceed to our original destination: but I begin to have some apprehensions lest the many uncertainties, which beset us, should prevent me from following my friends and my baggage, and I feel a strong regret that I was prevailed upon to leave the latter behind me.

In consequence of the sick-list becoming numerous, and the hospital being deprived of the services of poor Carrol, who, though a convalescent from his late attack, is unfit for duty in this climate, and has obtained leave to return to England, we are compelled to employ the medical officers of the regiments in the duties of the general hospital.



I have great pleasure in remarking to you, that General Whyte has been particularly attentive to the comfort of the sick, and the general accommodation of the hospital department. In every thing proposed for the benefit of the suffering soldiers, we have always been happy enough to meet with his full and ready acquiescence. It has only been necessary to point out what was required, and every attention was immediately given to the representation. You will believe that this has been highly gratifying to me, and the more so, when I add that the measures proposed have not been indifferently acceded to, but examined with a degree of attentive consideration, not less honorable to the General than satisfactory to myself.

It is also with much pleasure that I am enabled to add that Colonel Hislop, who succeeds to the command, is a man of great humanity and benevolence, and that we have every prospect of finding him desirous to follow the General's example in promoting the comfort and well-being of those who are in sickness.

Before he left us, General Whyte gave orders that a large cotton logis at La Bourgade

should be given up to the purposes of the hospital, and that a house near to it should be appropriated to the use of the medical officers. Thus have we the satisfaction of seeing the sick, and the whole of the department, very conveniently accommodated—the patients being lodged in a spacious and well aired building; and their attendants having commodious quarters immediately near to them, with convenient offices, and, what is of consequence in this climate, a large cistern for water adjoining—the whole possessing the further advantage of being separated from all other buildings, and standing within a square of ground of considerable extent, enclosed with private gates in front, and a deep ditch or canal on every side.

Here are we stationed, as a distinct department, quiet, and secluded—free from the noise and hurry both of the town and the fort, and nearly equidistant from the one and the other. The public road, from the fort to the town, passes close by the gates; and within less than a hundred yards from the road is the sea, or rather the opening of the river, so that the sick are brought to us conveniently on either

sider, by land, or by water. Perhaps another situation equally commodious for the purposes of the hospital department could not have been found in the colony.

Already have I changed my quarters from Stabroek to our new home at La Bourgade, and in future I shall be spared the necessity of dragging my legs through the deep mud, twice or thrice each day, in my visits to the hospital : but it does not seem probable that I shall long remain stationary, for I have received instructions to proceed to the colony of Berbische, to make arrangements for the hospital department there, as soon as I shall have brought these at La Bourgade into a proper establishment.

Fortunately my bedding was not left behind with my other baggage, and this is now put up in the windward apartment at our hospital barrack, where I look forward to much comfort, from the protection of my musquito curtain \*.

\* A kind of gauze net without opening, thrown over the whole of the bed and bedstead, and shut close at bottom, by means of a heavy border of lead, which falls upon the floor.



I find the distressing annoyance of insects a far greater evil than the increased temperature, or any other ill of climate. I now suffer considerably from the "prickly heat," but this would be very supportable were it not for the additional, and greater torment of musquitoes, ants, centipedes, jack-spaniards,\* and the multitudes of other insects biting, buzzing about our ears, crawling upon every thing we touch, and filling the whole atmosphere around us.

My nights have lately been made so wretchedly comfortless, that I have now established the habit of burning wet straw in my room, before I go to bed, in order to smoke out the insects. I likewise practise the habit of looking under my netting, with a lighted candle, after it is let down for the night, to see if any stragglers have been left within side, and if I find any there, I consider them as enemies lurking for my blood, and, immediately, put them to death. Selfishly looking to a good night's rest from his destruction, I have no compunction in taking away the life . . . . . of a musquito! Without contemplating the possible extent of his utility in

\* A large species of wasp.

the great scale of creation, I crush him with as little mercy as a chambermaid cracks a hopping flea. If you knew the acuteness of his bite, you would feel assured that he is not tortured with a lingering death. Nothing can be more prompt than his execution, and I think I might venture to assert that he suffers not a single moment of pain.

While my pen is employed upon this mighty subject, it occurs to me as a question whether even the rigorous principles of the most devoted Brahmin would so discipline his mind in religious and philosophical forbearance, as to induce him, deliberately, to brush from his skin a flea, or a musquito, that was inflicting sharp pain upon him, and robbing him of his blood? I do not remember ever to have seen, or heard of a person whose humanity led him to spare the life of a poor flea, although he is a very innocent little fellow, when compared to the sanguinary musquito : but it has occurred to me to see a gentleman, from a pure regard to the life of all created beings, tenderly and carefully put away a musquito that was bleeding him by the nose. He is a man whose general conduct is guided

by the most exemplary humanity, and whose talents command universal respect. He considers the little animal as only following the dictates of instinct, in procuring his food, and feels that he ought not to deal his vengeance against nature ;—or to take away the life he could not give. “Excellent philosophy,” methinks I hear you exclaim !—He may have brilliant talents, and vast acuteness of mind ; but he has no sensibility . . . . . of nose !

From the house we now occupy, at La Bourgade, a fine avenue of fruit trees leads down the whole depth of the estate, back to the wild forest ; or what is here termed “*the Bush*,” from which the plantation is separated only by a wet ditch and a bank. Rambling this afternoon in a solitary and pensive promenade, amongst the oranges and other fruit trees, protected from the musquitoes, by thick gloves and pantaloons, I, suddenly, found myself arrested, at the distance of a mile and a half from the house, by the deep woods which, in heavy gloom, oppose an impenetrable barrier to the estate. My sauntering walk being thus interrupted I became fixed in contemplation, and, with my eye resting upon the forest,



my mind dwelt on the solemnity of the scene, until I fell into a sort of contemplative reverie. The state of man on our globe ; his surprising powers in changing its surface ; the immensity he had done ; the extent of his influence ; the great proportion of the earth yet unknown to him ; the states of freedom and slavery ; the wide difference between man living in the woods, and in polished society ; the various stages of savage, and civilized life ; all passed in mental review before me. The varied appearance of different parts of the globe ; the diversity of climate ; the extent of these wild woods ; their removal by the all-subduing arm of man ; their remaining forever unexplored, and the undisturbed retreat afforded to their wild inhabitants ; all passed and repassed as subjects of my contemplation. Monkeys, savages, tigers, serpents, and all the infinite variety of animals possessing the woods traversed my thoughts. The grand purpose of life and being ; the utility of man ; wherefore placed on the globe ; and the whole host of such-like suggestions, multiplied by tenfold difficulties, presented themselves to my imagination. External objects ceased to impress my senses, and, becoming absorbed in the

great question of creation, I felt humbled at the idea that, in the wide scale of worlds, even man might be of little more importance than the minutest insect—perhaps not more than the very flea or musquito whose only purpose in creation seemed to be that of . . . . . tormenting him ! Pursuing its wanderings my mind ranged into the infinity of space, and there roved amidst the stars, until the very globe itself became as insignificant as the smallest ant that moves on its surface. Next occurred the infinite wisdom of the great Creator—I saw every thing perfect, and happily ordained, glanced at the inscrutable ways of Providence, and was lost in profound awe and reverence, when I was suddenly roused from my reverie, by the loud screaming of monkeys, and the astounding shrieks of a large flock of parrots.—It instantly struck my recollection that there were other, and more dangerous animals in the woods, and with the full strength of the impression, as in the moment of waking from a dream, I felt that besides monkeys and parrots these woods gave habitation to tigers and savages, and, worse than savages—to Bush-Negroes, to whom the scalp of a *backra* man would be an object of

gratification. You will believe that the soliloquy I had fallen into was quickly at an end. Sensible of the peril of my situation, I took up a rough staff for protection, and turning from the dark forest, and its savage inhabitants, hastily trod back my path into cultivated fields, and civilized society.

As I am to note to you all occurrences, and particularly such as are in any degree novel or interesting, I must not omit the following,—although it may seem to border upon the incredible. It is, nevertheless, a fact that a few days ago I was applied to by the wife of a colonist to request that I would *make some complaint* against the slaves of the house, to her husband, very *humanely* urging as a reason for imposing upon me so *grateful* a task, that she wished “*to get them a good flogging!*” I trust that neither you, nor any of our fair friends, on the temperate side of the Atlantic, will condemn my want of gallantry in resisting the solicitation. Perhaps, in the brightest days of chivalry, the most adulatory knight had not been obsequious enough to have devoted to gallantry, at such an expence of humanity. It was not even con-



tended that any specific fault had been committed to justify the punishment, but this was *to be invented*, and merely because some idle whim—some fit of caprice, or ill humor had led the mistrefs of these poor slaves to wish them “*a good flogging!*”

## LETTER XV.

*Bush Negroes in the woods of Guiana. Fate of Dutch soldiers sent into the forest against them. Corps of slaves accompanied by a party of Indians subdue them. Punishment of a Bush Negro, named Amsterdam.*

Demarara, May 16.

**I**N my last letter I mentioned that in the woods of these colonies there are bodies of men called "Bush Negroes." These are mostly run-away slaves who have revolted from their masters, and having collected together in the forest, have there formed themselves into bodies, under certain captains or leaders; and have established various habitations and encampments in the thickest parts of what is termed "the Bush;" where they now live in all the worst habits of savage nature; and are become mere hordes of brigands or marauders.

They are negroes of the worst description, cruel, blood-thirsty and revengeful: men, whose crimes in European, and all

welordered states, would have been punished with death. Many have murdered white inhabitants, massacred their masters, or revolted in combination, plotting the destruction of the planters, in order to take the colony into their own possession ; but being frustrated in their designs, have saved themselves from punishment, by flying into the hidden recesses of the forest ; from whence they issue only to ravage and plunder.

They had subjected themselves to a sort of regular discipline under their captains and lieutenants, and the lower orders of them (for there are distinctions even among run-away slaves) were compelled to toil in the night, by going out of the woods, in plundering parties, to steal plantains and other provisions from the estates ; but the labour to which they were exposed, by this night-duty, was so much more severe than that required of them, in their common duty, as slaves upon the plantations, that some of them have been known to desert back from the woods, and return to a state of slavery, after having run away from their masters to live in idleness, as they had expected, with their brethren in " the Bush."



I wish I could repeat to you, as eloquently as I heard it related, the very interesting detail of an expedition sent into the woods against these Bush negroes, last year, under the command of major M'Grah, and captain Dougan. Many persons had been robbed, and had their property otherwise injured by their predatory excursions;—indeed the whole colony was disturbed, and, from the increasing number of these sanguinary hordes, was threatened with eventual destruction. It was therefore resolved that a body of troops should be sent into the woods to search for their places of resort, and to endeavour to subdue or exterminate them. A party of the Dutch soldiers of the garrison was, accordingly, equipped for this duty; and marched in due military order into the forest.

But this was not the species of force calculated for such an expedition: and from not having observed all the minute precautions required, in this new and hazardous kind of warfare, they were surprized and defeated by the negroes; and very few of the soldiers escaped with their lives—most of them being killed, and their scalps, or bodies, fixed against

the trees, to serve as an example of what others had to expect who should venture on a similar expedition \*.

The government and the colonists having discovered, from this fatal experience, that the Bush negroes were more formidable than had been expected; and finding that regular European troops were not the best fitted for this kind of service, raised a corps of negroes from among the most faithful of the slaves; and also engaged in their interest a party of Indians from the woods, who, happily for the planters, hold the Bush negroes in great abhorrence.

Well provided and equipped, this second expedition, commanded as above-mentioned, separated into two parties, and boldly advanced into the wood to form a combined attack. Upon their march they passed the dead bodies of the Dutch soldiers tied to the trees at the sides of a narrow path. Not deterred by this

\* Upon this occasion one of the officers was carried out of the wood by a faithful slave, who, afterwards, refused to accept his freedom as a reward; and only begged to have a silver medal to wear on days of festival.

horrid example, they proceeded onward, having the sagacious Indians on their flanks; by whose acuteness and penetration they discovered the various situations, where the different companies of the Brigands had taken up their residence, and, by well concerted attacks, defeated and routed them wheresoever they met them. As an encouragement to the able and new raised troops, a premium was offered for every right hand of a Bush negro that should be brought in; and when they returned from the expedition, they appeared with seventy black arms displayed upon the points of their bayonets, causing a very singular and shocking spectacle to the beholders. Three hundred guilders each had been fixed as the price, but it was found necessary to reduce the premium, lest the slaves should kill their prisoners, or even destroy each other to obtain it.

The exertion and fatigue required in such an expedition cannot well be conceived by those who are accustomed only to regular and systematic warfare: nor is it probable that such a service could have been supported in this climate by European soldiers. In addi-



tion to all the difficulties of making their way through the unknown and almost impenetrable woods, they knew not where to find the enemy's posts; and were, at every minute, liable to be fallen upon by surprize.

At first entering the Bush, the march was continued to a great distance, nearly knee-deep in water; and when further advanced, the troops had to scramble through the thickets; or follow each other by a confined path in Indian file; and, after the harassing march of the day, to lie down at night, on the bare ground, under the trees—the officers suspending their hammocks from bough to bough in the open air. They had, moreover to carry the whole of their provisions, arms, ammunition, and every other necessary required for the success of the expedition, upon their backs.

But for the assistance given by the Indians, the brigands had probably never been subdued; perhaps not found! The expertness of these men, in such a pursuit, is peculiar, and beyond all that could be imagined, by those who live in crowded society. They not only

hear sounds in the woods, which are imperceptible to others, but judge, with surprising accuracy, of the distance and direction from whence they proceed. The position of a fallen leaf, or the bending of a bramble, too slight to be noticed by an European eye, conveys to them certain intelligence respecting the route taken by those whom they pursue. From constant practice and observation, their organs of sense become highly improved, and they hear with an acuteness, and see with a precision truly surprising to those who are unacquainted with their habits, and their vigilance. With such guides, the expedition moved in confidence, and was conducted in safety. Seven encampments of the brigands were discovered and completely routed ; some of which had existed during fifteen years, concealed in the profoundest gloom of the forest.

The following was the mode usually observed in establishing these places of residence and resort. Having fixed upon the spot most convenient for their purpose, a circular piece of ground was cleared of its wood, and, in the centre of this, they built huts, and formed the encampment, planting round about the build-

ings, oranges, bananas, plantains, yams, eddoes, and other kinds of provisions ; thus, in addition to the trees of the forest, procuring themselves further concealment by the plantations which gave them food. The eddoes were found in great plenty, and had seemed to constitute their principal diet. Round the exterior of the circular spot was cut a deep and wide ditch, which, being filled with water, and stuck, at the sides and bottom, with sharp pointed stakes, served as a formidable barrier of defence. The path across this ditch was placed two or three feet below the surface, and wholly concealed from the eye by the water being always thick and muddy. Leaves were strewed, and stepping-stones, similar in their kind, made to the edges of the ditch, at various parts, as a precaution, to deceive any who might approach, respecting the real situation of the path. But the proper place of crossing was found out by the acuteness of the Indians, who soon discovered that to attempt to pass at any other part, was to be empaled alive.

It was found that the Brigands had eight of these encampments, or points of rendezvous in the woods, one of which is supposed still



to remain undiscovered. After much fatigue in endeavoring to find it, the search was relinquished, in the idea that some of the prisoners, either by indulgence or torture, would be induced to make it known: but this expectation has only led to disappointment. All the means used have failed, and the prisoners, faithful to their cause, have suffered torture and death without betraying their forest-associates.

The cruel severities inflicted upon these miserable blacks have been such as you will scarcely believe could have been suggested or practised by any well-ordered government: for, however strongly punishment was merited, the refinement of torture with which it was executed ought never to have been tolerated in any state professing to be civilized. Humanity shudders at the bare recital of it.

Most of the ring-leaders were taken, and brought to Stabroek, where they were afterwards tried and executed, the majority of them suffering with a degree of fortitude and heroism worthy a better cause. One in particular, named Amsterdam, supported the ex-

treme of punishment with a firmness truly astonishing. He was subjected to the most shocking torture, in order to compel him to give information regarding the remaining encampment—but in vain ! He despised the severest suffering, and nothing could induce him to betray his late companions, or to make known their yet undiscovered retreat.

He was sentenced to be burnt alive, first having the flesh torn from his limbs with red-hot pincers ; and in order to render his punishment still more terrible, he was compelled to sit by, and see thirteen others broken and hung ; and then, in being conducted to execution, was made to walk over the thirteen dead bodies of his comrades. Being fastened to an iron-stake, surrounded with the consuming pile, which was about to be illumined, he regarded the by-standers with all the complacency of heroic fortitude, and exhibiting the most unyielding courage, resolved that all the torture ingenuity or cruelty might invent should not extort from him a single groan ; nor a syllable that could in any way impeach his friends.

With the first pair of pincers, the executioner tore the flesh from one of his arms. The sudden infliction of pain caused him to recede, in a slight degree, from the irons; and he drew in his breath, as if to form it into a sigh, but he instantly recovered himself—his countenance upbraided him, and he manifestly took shame for having betrayed even the slightest sense of suffering—then, resuming more, if possible, than his former composure, he patiently waited the approach of the next irons, and, on these being brought towards him, he steadfastly cast his eye upon them, inclined a little forward, and with an unshaken firmness of countenance, deliberately met their burning grasp! From that moment he shewed himself capable of despising the severest pain. Not a feature was afterwards disturbed, and he preserved a degree of composure implying absolute contempt of torture and of death.

Finally, when the destructive pile was set in flames, his body spun round the iron stake, with the mouth open, until his head fell back, and life was extinguished. I am told, by a gentleman who had the melancholy task to attend the execution, that the most



horrid stench continued, for many hours, to issue from the roasting body, and was extremely offensive throughout the town, penetrating so strongly into the houses to leeward, as to make many persons sick, and prevent them from taking food during the remainder of the day.

The conduct of this negro furnishes a striking example of the powers of the human mind in subduing our bodily sufferings, and might seem, even, to corroborate the doctrine which maintains that all pain is ideal.

Another of the chiefs, or captains, who was taken, is still in confinement at the fort, under sentence of death. His execution has been delayed in the hope of learning, from him, the situation of the yet remaining encampment; but, hitherto, to no purpose; and from his present conduct, it may be expected that he will die as relentless and inflexible as his comrade Amsterdam.

## LETTER XVI.

*Description of house and furniture occupied by the medical Staff at La Bourgade. Entertainment given to some gentlemen of the navy. Provision-excursions. Arrangements concerning prize-money. Benefit and importance of musquito curtains. Stability of temperature, and of the breeze in Guiana. Singular application made to the author for an appointment in the medical department.*

La Bourgade, May 21,

I HAVE before informed you that the barrack allotted to the medical officers is a very commodious house, situated near to the hospital; but I gave you no account of the furniture; nor did I describe to you what we here esteem a comfortable dwelling. Let me, therefore, tell you that our mansion is built wholly of wood, and is of the simplest construction. Being set upon low pillars, it is so raised from the ground as to leave sufficient space for dogs and small pigs to pass under it. Chimnies and fire places are not required. The windows are naked holes in the wooden sides, and are neither closed with plate glass, nor

well-fitted sashes, but hung with heavy shutters on the outside, to protect us in time of rain. No fine stucco plasters the walls, nor are the rooms hung with rich paper or tapestry. No painted cloth, nor soft carpet spreads the floor, nor do any rich cornices, or figured plasterings decorate the ceiling. Above, below, and at the sides, all is plain wood : the walls, the ceilings, and the floors are alike of naked boards; many of them so joined together as to allow free admission to air and light. Sitting in the parlour, we see through the openings into the bed-room above; and to the pigs rooting below. The roof is also of wood, and open to the bed-chambers, which are hung only with the well-spun tapestry . . . . . of industrious spiders. An old bench, or form, with three or four chairs of rough wood, and a coarse deal board, laid upon a pair of cross legs by way of table, complete the furniture.

Thus accommodated, you will be amused to hear that, we have had company to visit us at our dinner table. Ladies ! did you ask ? No, not ladies ! but a party from one of his majesty's ships of war, who were led, by curiosity, to see how the "soldier-officers," (as



they term the gentlemen of the army) were accommodated on shore. They did not express themselves violently envious of our comforts ; but were much diverted in forming conjectures what might have been the remarks of some of our friends in luxurious London, could they have glanced an eye upon our humble banquet, and the general order of our *manege*. A piece of hard salt beef graced one end of the table, a heavy lump of salt pork the other, and salt-meat soup supplied the place of the rich *plateau* in the middle. Such is our daily repast, and such was our feast ; for we gave to our visitors the most sumptuous fare of the larder. Fresh animal provisions are dainties we can very seldom procure, and indeed, were it not for the daily allowance dealt out to us by government, we should be confined to a diet of yams and plantains, like the slaves. During the passage from England, and while we were lying at Barbadoes, we disregarded our salt allowance, nor did we, till now, comprehend the high value of a government ration ; but it is here become of the greatest importance, and forms, to us, as well as to the soldiers, the principal supply.

We often dispatch negroes to the distant plantations upon the coast, or the borders of the river, in search of fowls, ducks, roasting pigs, or any other fresh provisions; but they so commonly return empty handed, that we have been led to suspect them of idleness or neglect, and have been induced to make the experiment ourselves, by going in a boat to different estates up the river, with a view of purchasing poultry or other stock. But we have been equally unsuccessful; sometimes failing altogether, and at others procuring only a single chicken, or a roasting pig to serve a mess of six persons for the week. It happened one week that we met with a whole litter of young roasters to the number of six, when we thought ourselves in high good fortune; but as we had no convenient means of keeping them fat or in condition, we were unable to economize the use of them, and from eating pig, pig, pig, every day till they were all consumed, together with the accident of our black and stupid cook, occasionally leaving a little savoury stuffing within, we were not only in danger of growing into porkers ourselves, but became so entirely fatigued with pig as to make it extremely doubt-

ful whether we shall ever be able to eat it again.

Beef, veal, and mutton are luxuries beyond our reach. This colony does not supply them in sufficient quantity for its ordinary consumption: we do not therefore expect them, except by way of an occasional feast. The great additional demand for fresh provisions, since our arrival, has likewise taken off all the surplus of smaller stock, and left scarcely a spare duck or a chicken in the colony.

In one of our provision-hunting excursions to the western coast, we had the good fortune to fall in with Captain Dougan, whom we found residing there, in command of the remnant of the black corps, which was raised last year for the expedition against the Bush negroes. From this gentleman we experienced every mark of polite and hospitable attention. In our conversation we discovered that he was the son of the gentleman I had seen at "Profit;" and, on his learning that I had visited his father, we were at once old acquaintances. But this was not required to call forth the captain's hospitality, for he



had previously insisted upon our dining, and passing the remainder of the day with him ; and he gave us an excellent dinner, and plenty of good wines, with the most cordial welcome. Cassada cake and roasted plantains were served instead of bread, and with our fowls we had a sauce prepared from the cassada juice, which loses its poisonous quality by boiling and evaporation, and becomes somewhat like the essence used under the name of foy.

On taking our leave, in the evening, we received many polite and liberal invitations to repeat our visit ; had our boat loaded with fruit, and were desired to send for a further supply whenever it might be acceptable. The estate was rich in oranges and plantains, beyond all we had visited ; and so universally were the fields intersected with rows of fruit trees, that whichever path we pursued, the eye looked down a fine avenue loaded, and yellow with fruit.

Let me announce to you that I have lately been called upon to give in a return of the officers of the hospital-staff entitled to

prize-money, in order to enable the agents to make the necessary arrangement for the distribution of the property. This would seem to augur favorably : at all events it is satisfactory to have our claim established, and to see things placed in an equitable train ; but we are not so sanguine as to expect our shares thus soon, should we be fortunate enough to receive them at all \*.

You will be pleased to hear that although we are still sadly annoyed with musquitoes during the day and the evening, our nights are passed, at our new home, in all of rest and comfort. In Carlisle bay, and at Stabroek, notwithstanding that I slept with the door and windows open, I always felt heated and restless in bed ; and, too commonly, rose with a painful and spotted skin in the morning. At La Bourgade I am free from these inconveniences, and it were difficult to imagine the great and genuine comfort I derive from passing my nights in rest and composure. I lie upon a hard mattress, without any bedding under it,

\* It has been already remarked, that not the smallest division of this prize-money has yet been shared by the captors.



covered only with a thin cotton sheet, and protected by my friendly and most valued mosquito curtain. Even with the door and windows shut, I can rest without feeling myself unpleasantly heated; and, surrounded with my netting, I quietly regard the host of mosquitoes and other insects buzzing about me, without the fear of their disturbing my repose.

Lying thus in coolness and security, after the disturbed and unpleasant nights of late weeks, I do verily enjoy my bed as a great luxury. Instead of rising wearied by restlessness, and exhausted by excess of heat, I now quit my pillow, in the morning, refreshed, and recruited for the busy round of the day.

From the situation of these colonies with respect to the sun and the ocean, and from the territory being a continued flat, we are scarcely ever without a free and steady breeze, which creates an equable temperature, and renders the climate peculiarly uniform. At six in the morning the thermometer is usually between 74 and 77 degrees, and at noon it has seldom varied more than from 81 to 84 degrees. It



being now the wet season, much rain commonly falls during the night ; and, frequently very heavy showers in the course of the day ; such as quickly find their way through all the garments of those who happen to be exposed to them, for the heaviest thunder storms of England are scarcely sufficient to give you an idea of their force and rapidity.

As I am to commune with you upon all subjects, and all occurrences, I may tell you that a few days ago I received a very singular and unexpected visit from a dirty-looking, ill-dressed man, who was an entire stranger to me ; and who, stalking abruptly into the room, addressed himself to me, saying, without any preliminary salutation, “ I am just called to see you,” then asked if “ the slaves still remained upon the estate ;” and, following up his questions, without waiting for any reply, went on to a train of interrogatories, desiring to know “ if the army wanted a doctor ”—very *liberally* tendering his services, provided he “ could obtain a *good appointment*.”—Had his abilities been consummate as his assurance, he might have been a valuable acquisition to us ; but, as appearances did not exactly be-

ſpeak this, I had only to bow, in humble regret that we had no appointment adequate to his merits, and to lament that we could not avail ourſelves of the diſtinguiſhed honor he had intended the department,

## LETTER XVII.

*Author's duties lead him to the colony of Berbische. Establishes a comparative inquiry respecting the diseased appearances after different disorders, with a view to ascertain what are the changes produced by yellow fever. The more robust most liable to be destroyed by the fever of the climate. An example in the superintending cook at the hospital. Execution of a Bush Negro. Public punishment of a party of blacks. Unjust punishment of a Negro Carpenter.*

Demarara, May 25.

THE hospital at La Bourgade being now established, and placed under proper regulations for the accommodation of the sick, I shall proceed, without delay, to the settlement of Berbische in order to make the necessary hospital arrangements for that colony.

It grieves me very sincerely to be able to tell you, that we are likely to have an ample opportunity of prosecuting our inquiries respecting the state of the viscera after yellow fever : but in order that we may not be deceived by appearances, we purpose, likewise, to examine the bodies of those who may be de-



stroyed by other maladies, whereby we shall be enabled to judge more accurately what are the real changes induced by that disease.

To offer you any details upon this subject would not only be premature, but foreign to my present purpose. Suffice it therefore to know that we shall avail ourselves of the occasions which may occur, and that in number they promise infinitely to exceed our wishes. Among the late sufferers we have had the misfortune to lose our superintending cook, at the hospital. He was a man of peculiar strength, voice, and appetite. The sick on board-ship used to complain that he ate up almost the whole of their food : when he spake, his voice was as the roaring of thunder ; and in point of muscular strength, he was quite Herculean. The attack was severe, and he quickly fell a sacrifice, experiencing all the inveterate symptoms of the fever, with the exception only, of the yellowness of the skin,—that uncertain mark from which the name of the disease has been, erroneously, taken. The disorder was early marked with uncommon restlessness and anxiety, an indescribable sensation at the region of the stomach, and an almost incessant vomit-

ing of a black fluid resembling the grounds of coffee.

Among the distressful scenes it has lately been my lot to witness, I may tell you, that a few mornings ago, I chanced to be at Stabroek at the time of the execution of the captain of the Bush Negroes whom I mentioned to you in a former letter. He died faithful to his cause, and no information could be obtained from him regarding the encampment still remaining in the woods. He was sentenced to be suspended by the neck for a short time, and then taken down, while yet alive, to have his head severed from his body. The executioner was a negro, who, without any feelings of compunction, or of sorrow for his countryman, exulted in the adroitness with which he took off the head at a single blow.

After the execution I sat a short time with the officers, at the barrack of the 99th regiment ; when another painful scene was exhibited to our observation, in the flogging of a party of negroes, before the fiscal's door, upon the public street.

Upon one of them being released from the stakes, to which he had been tied down, with his face to the earth, during his punishment, I thought that I recognized his features, and on going out to ascertain the fact, I discovered him to be one of the carpenters, who had been set apart to work, under my directions, at the hospital. It happened, too, that he had distinguished himself by his industry, and was the man with whom I had most conversed, on account of his speaking English, and being able to explain my instructions to his fellow-workmen.

You will believe that I felt an interest regarding him, and that I was anxious to learn by what offence he had brought upon himself the severe punishment we had witnessed. To this end, in company with Major Say and other officers, I followed the poor bleeding man to his home, where we learned that the alleged crime for which he had been punished was —— striking a white man ; although in fact it appeared to have been a refusal to get up from his bed, at 9 o'clock at night, to work for a white inhabitant of the town, after labouring at the hospital during the whole of the day.



It was further hinted by those about him, that something of pique or prejudice, on account of the poor man expressing himself pleased with his employment at the British hospital, might possibly have operated in deafening the ear of justice against him.

These circumstances gave additional interest to his case, and we felt ourselves called upon, no less by humanity, than inclination, to ascertain the truth of it ; and if the poor man had been unjustly punished, to endeavor to bring the authors of it to shame.

A Dutchman who happened to be present at the time we were making inquiries, in the carpenter's shop to which the negro belonged, told us, with an air of confidence, that he had been punished for striking *him*, and cutting his elbow with a *large chissel* ; shewing us the very chissel with which the wound had been made, and the precise spot whereon it had happened, at the same time exhibiting his arm supported in a sling. All this being so circumstantially stated, four of us, Major Say, the surgeon of the 99th., another officer and myself, begged to see this frightful wound which had

been cut in the elbow : some objections were offered on the ground of disturbing the dressings, unsewing the bandages and the like : but as Mr. Blackader promised to replace all these in fit order, we persisted in the request ; and the Dutchman finding that we were urgent, and rather inclined to be peremptory, at length submitted : but the coat was said to fit inconveniently tight ; the shirt sleeve to be tied in a hard knot, and other little difficulties and delays were thrown in the way. Still we determined to subdue them all ; and when, at last, we succeeded, lo ! instead of the many bandages, and complex dressings we had been taught to expect, we could neither find a plaster, nor the wound. Instead of a deep cut from a chissel, a slight bruise only appeared upon the elbow, the skin being neither cut, nor broken. This seemed to strengthen our suspicions that the poor slave had been unfairly treated ; and by prosecuting the inquiry we learned the following history.

The Dutchman had gone to the carpenter's shop in the evening in search of a carpenter to do some work at a house in the town ; and finding this negro sleeping in the room

over the workshop, insisted upon his getting up to go with him. The poor fellow pleaded that it was night, that he had toiled through the whole of the day, and further that he was ordered by the commandant to work only at the hospital until that was completed. The Dutchman, nevertheless, insisted upon his going. The slave unhappily refused. Words ensued; and the white man, seizing the black by the hair of his head, dragged him down into the workshop; where, in the scuffle, the Dutchman happened to receive a bruise of the elbow.

The following morning a complaint was made to a public officer, high in power, stating that the negro had struck the Dutchman, and wounded him; and it being an offence utterly unpardonable for a black man, under any circumstances, to lift his hand against a white one, the poor slave, without further inquiry, was sentenced to receive the punishment we had witnessed.

We could not feel satisfied that the proceedings had been conducted with a due regard to justice, and therefore we waited upon the



person who had decreed the punishment, to inquire further into the merits of it; and were told by him, that the negro had been punished “for striking a white man, with a *heavy stick*, and a *large nail* in it, and therewith cutting a deep wound in his elbow.” As this account differed from that of the Dutchman himself, we asked this man of power, if the sentence had been pronounced barely upon the man’s own report. Certainly not, he replied; the deposition was further sanctioned by the testimony of four respectable witnesses who appeared in evidence, having seen the negro strike the white man with the great stick with a great nail in it.

We then used the freedom of asking if he had taken the trouble to look at this wounded elbow *himself*. He had, he said, “and a sad cut it was.” Had we not been stricken dumb with the reply, we might have exclaimed, “Alas! unhappy blacks! what hope have ye of justice, if not only private, but also public punishments be thus awarded.”

As soon as our surprise and indignation would permit, we informed this *man of justice*

that four of us had minutely examined this frightful cut of the elbow, and that, with all our eight eyes strained as wide as they could stare, we had not even been able to discover the wound ; adding, for his further information, that the Dutchman had, himself, assured us that it was cut with a large chissel : but that, in fact it had neither been cut with a chissel, nor with a nail in a stick, nor cut at all ; being only a slight bruise which had probably happened in the struggle, when the Dutchman was pulling about the negro by the hair of his head. We also ventured to add that the whole tale of this mighty wound was a scandalous imposition ; and the punishment which had been inflicted upon the negro a gross injustice. We then appealed to this arbitrary guardian of the laws, very earnestly demanding whether, in justice to the injured negro, to the public, and to himself, who had been thus deceived and imposed upon, he would not feel it incumbent upon him to institute an inquiry regarding the fact, and to have the cruel wretch, and his four perjured witnesses, severely punished—but of course we made no remark upon his having seen the sad cut in the elbow *with his own eyes !* Whe-

ther from feeling himself implicated, or from a reluctance arising from any other cause, this great officer of *justice* did not seem to be of accord with our sentiments upon the subject ; but endeavored to divert us from the question by expatiating upon the high necessity of holding slaves in subjection, and the great danger and impolicy of overlooking, in any instance, the crime of their lifting the hand against a white man. We readily conceded to him that upon the present system—it was strongly necessary to be tenacious of the privileges assumed, but we could never agree that it was either just or wise, to punish a poor unprotected man upon the false accusation of a set of perjured wretches, merely because Nature had covered him with a black skin, and them with a white one ; nor that it was fit not to expose such wanton malice to public shame, whenever the falsehood and injustice of the testimony should be detected ; therefore, pledging ourselves to appear in evidence, whenever called upon, we left the office obtaining a promise from this man of power, to institute an inquiry, and to have justice done to the poor injured slave !



Whether our endeavors in his behalf may be crowned with success, is extremely doubtful, but the unhappy history of our carpenter's punishment will convey to you some idea of the kind of justice to be expected by slaves. The alleged offender is not heard in mitigation, nor are any of his colour admitted in evidence, although they might be able wholly to disprove the charge; hence, whenever a white man is base enough to perjure himself in accusation, the slave can have no hope of escaping from punishment.

## LETTER XVIII.

*Author embarks on board a Commissariat sloop to proceed from Demarara to Berbische. Expects to complete the passage in a few hours, but is detained at sea four days and nights, deprived of almost every necessary and every comfort. Description of the Voltigeur and its accommodations. The cabin a wretched hole of filth and vermin. Its furniture. The library. Expedition of passengers in the boat. Various and tormenting delays. The captain enraged and intemperate. View at the opening of the Berbische river. Happy sensations on arriving at Fort William Frederic.*

Berbische, May 31.

EXPECTING a passage of only a few hours to this colony, I left Demarara the day after writing to you my last letter, on board a small vessel which I had not seen previous to embarking for the voyage ; and which offered no accommodation but that of being bound direct to the place of my destination. This, indeed, seemed to be all that was required, for I was assured both on shore, and when I arrived on board, that, in less than twenty-four hours, we should be at Berbische. But,

consistent with the uncertainties to which I am always doomed, whenever my person is entrusted to the fickle ocean, this short passage, from a multitude of adverse circumstances, was extended to a sadly tedious voyage ; and, in many respects, the most comfortless and disagreeable I have known. Instead of a few hours only, we were four long days at sea. A minute detail of the progress of each successive day may, perhaps, be as tedious to you as the voyage has been to me : yet, to say, merely, that we were four days making a passage of only a few leagues, would convey to you no idea of the extreme discomfort, and the various and multiplied annoyances to which I was exposed. Let me, therefore, give you the particulars in my own way, and, if it seemeth meet, you may take as many days to read the history of the voyage as we did to make it ; and then if you please, you may commit it, as I would gladly have done the vessel in which it was written . . . . to the flames.

At eight o'clock on the morning of the 26th inst., I embarked on board the above sloop to proceed from Fort William Frederic,



at the mouth of the Demarara river, to Fort St. Andrew, at the entrance of the river Berbische. The vessel was employed by the Commissariat, to convey stores and provisions to the garrison. She was named *Voltigeur*, and if the term was meant to imply a rolling and tumbling vessel, in opposition to every thing of speed or expedition, it, surely, could not have been more correctly applied, for never did an unwieldy cask move more heavily on the water.

Quite unexpectedly I met with five other passengers on board, to all of whom I was an entire stranger. I thought myself fortunate in having procured three small chickens, and a salted pig's face, with some fruit and vegetables, as my share of stock for the voyage; and which, I was told by my friends on shore, who had often made the passage, was an ample supply, it being probable that I should not have to remain more than a single day on board. The other gentlemen, having more confidence, than myself, in the wind, the sea, and the *Vol-tigeur*, had embarked without provisions or stores of any kind.

The anchor was weighing when I arrived on board, I, therefore, had scarcely any opportunity of seeing my fellow passengers before we were under sail; nor had I time to become at all acquainted with them ere I was compelled to retreat, and to hide myself from their society; for, as usual, my head became sensible of the sea-motion before we had well escaped from the river, and my stomach sympathizing, violent sickness seized me, and I was compelled to hurry to bed.

Till now I had taken no thought regarding either cabin or couch, the shortness of the voyage, and the warm and steady temperature of the climate had superseded all concern respecting a berth for the night—every accommodation being assured to me by sitting upon deck, or lying down in the open air. The ills of noon, and the unaccommodating nature of the *Voltigeur* had no share in my calculations. But I now discovered that no relief to the present sufferings could be had upon deck. To sit up was impossible, the violence of the reaching being altogether insupportable, and, as the vessel offered no protecting shade, to lie down upon the deck, exposed to the full

power of a burning sun, was to invite almost certain disease ; and, further, as there were no quarter-boards, nor any other defence at the sides of the sloop, I must have been every moment in danger of being rolled overboard into the sea.

Under these circumstances I was driven to seek shelter in the cabin, such as it might chance to be ; and, to this end, I was conducted to a kind of trap-door in the quarter-deck, called a hatch-way ; and, the hatch being lifted off, a dark hole below was pointed out to me as the cabin, and the only place where I could recline my aching head, or hope relief for my sickened stomach. Subdued by the depressing languor of nausea, I was too ill to hesitate ;—to lie down was my only care. A death-like sickness impelled me on ; and, unassisted by stairs or ladder, I dropped myself, by means of my trembling arms, down the opening into this murky cell. My feet were quickly arrested by the old chests, and other lumber scattered about this filthy place, which was not of sufficient depth to admit of my standing upright, without being half out at the hatch-way ; neither was there room to sit



down, nor a chair, nor stool to rest upon—hence it only remained to me to crawl upon my hands and knees over the loose chests and barrels to the farthest extent of the cabin, and there throw myself into a wooden birth fixed at the side; which I found too short to admit of the full extension of my person, and too near the planks of the deck above, to allow of my remaining in any but an extended posture.

Still the annihilating nausea I suffered rendering me insensible to all other ills, I folded myself up, as well as the shortness and narrowness of my contracted birth would allow, and assuming, as nearly as I could, the horizontal position, sought only to escape from the distressing sickness that overpowered me: nor was it until this had somewhat abated that I discovered the horrors of the contracted dungeon into which I had crawled. Darkness and nausea had concealed from me, not only the limited extent, but the many other ills of this wretched hole. At a moment when the all-concealing sickness had a little subsided, a sailor with a light in his hand, dropped through the opening by which I had descended. It

were impossible to describe the sensations I experienced upon discovering the scene which now opened to me. The execrable nest in which I was lying was not simply crowded and confined, beyond all that the annoyances I had felt had led me to suspect, but it was a *tout ensemble* of nastiness, that defies all description. Words can only convey to you, a faint idea of the dirty and abominable place, in which, for four long days, sick and without food, I had to live.

This horrid cell, called a cabin, was only six feet long, seven wide, and four in depth; and was further contracted to less than half its dimension, by the loose old chests, and worm-eaten coffers standing on the deck below; the thick sheets of cobwebs suspended from the deck above; and the crowd of filthy ornaments hanging on all sides. To sit or to stand appeared impossible; scarcely, indeed, was there room to lie down, or to breathe. Not only was I shocked to see the noxious den I was in, but was puzzled to conjecture how I could have steered my passage to the birth, where I was lying. Both the entrance to the cabin, and the path I had travelled to

my couch were such as I could only have passed during the insensibility of a severe fit of nausea. Descending from the hatch-way above, I must have alighted upon a heap of unfixed trunks and coffers, at the risk of my legs being jammed between them ; then I had to crawl, upon my hands and knees, over the old unsteady lumber, breaking my way through filth-thickened cobwebs, at the hazard of being entangled in the strong net-work of gigantic spiders, whose labours had known no interruption since the building of the ship ; and who, by constant toil, had manufactured sheets and cordage of almost sufficient strength to work it. But when compared to the many other offensive things which filled the place, these arachnoide hangings might be regarded as the rich tapestry of the apartment.

I was really seized with terror on beholding the actual state of this noisome prison-hole, for, considering its confined limits, and the multiplicity of foul and offensive things that were crammed into it, it appeared quite miraculous that I should have escaped the fate of our countrymen who were consigned to the celebrated hole of Calcutta.



At each side of this dark abode was a fixed sleeping birth which was narrow, short, and dirty. The centre was filled with barrels, tubs, old sea chests, greasy coffers, and other lumber. At one end stood a tub of stinking salt meat; at the other, one with rotten potatoes, and pots of rancid butter. The cabin was the general receptacle—the store-house, cellar, pantry, and larder of the ship. Under the births, saluting the noses of those lying in them, were filthy worm-eaten chests, filled with dirty long-worn apparel, and other high-effenced contents. One was set apart for unwashed knives and forks, dirty plates, basons, and dishes; another for the odorous remains of yesterday's dinner. In one corner stood a bag of musty biscuit—in another hung an old grease-thickened lantern. Hand-spikes, marline-spikes, dirty swabs, a broken, mouldy case with a compass—an old worm-eaten ditto with a quadrant, two or three broken fishing lines, a battered old speaking trumpet, and a variety of other implements, hung, or strewn about, added to the furniture of the apartment.

But worst of all were the poisonous old

blankets of the sleeping births; and the myriads of insects and vermin crawling about, and making a public high-way of my body. Rats and mice, cockroaches, musquitoes, fleas, and ants formed only a part of the catalogue.

You will believe that on discovering how I was placed, I lost no time in attempting my escape from this wretched nest. But, on rising, a violent and enfeebling sickness again seized me, and from the causes I have mentioned, it was impossible to remain upon deck; I therefore made the experiment of standing in the hatchway, with my head through the opening, so as to catch the passing breeze; but the intense heat from the perpendicular rays of the sun, and the death-like nausea and incessant reaching produced by the erect position, soon chased me from this wholesome station, and left me only a choice of evils—either to extend myself upon deck exposed to burning heat, at the risk of being rolled overboard into the sea; or, again, to throw myself into the deadly hole I had left. The former of these measures almost insured disease—the latter threatened a poisonous suffocation, and the danger of being devoured by vermin.

In this dilemma—unable to decide which might prove the lesser evil, and almost sinking from the languor produced by nausea and vomiting, I, at length, resolved to return to the manifold ills of the cabin; but continued at the hatch-way, supporting a degree of reaching, which almost inverted my stomach, while one of the sailors removed the blankets, and other offensive things, that were in the birth, and swept and scrubbed it out, in order to give me the bare boards as a resting place.

I now drew on a pair of thick fustian pantaloons that reached down to my feet; buckled them fast in my shoes; put on a pair of strong gloves; covered my head and great part of my face, with my night-cap; and changing my coat for a loose morning gown, rolled myself up so as to leave scarcely more than my nose accessible; and, thus protected, tumbled again into the birth I had quitted, bidding defiance to the insects, vermin, and every annoyance around me. Fortunately my senses were not, at this moment, very acute, for I laboured under a severe catarrh which deprived me of the faculties of smelling, and tasting, and almost robbed me of sight. By



sickness and want of rest, my sense of feeling was also become torpid ; so that the ear was the only organ which retained its full power of receiving offensive impressions. Situated as I was, all this might be considered as fortunate, for I was compelled to remain throughout the remainder of the day, either violently reaching, or sickly viewing the wretched and disgusting scene around me.

Before evening poor old Mr. Serjeant, one of my fellow passengers, was likewise seized with sickness, and compelled to seek relief by reclining his head in the opposite birth of the cabin. I had now a companion in my affliction, but this brought no alleviation to my sufferings.—I felt that this old gentleman, who possessed a large property and all the comforts of an opulent estate, might be less prepared than myself, to encounter the hardships and annoyances we were exposed to ; and this idea, in no degree, contributed to my relief. In painful sympathy we mutually bewailed each other's distress, looking with anxious hope to a less offensive birth upon the open deck, when the sun should take his leave for the night.

But in this expectation we were grievously disappointed. The retreat of the sun was succeeded by heavy torrents of rain; and instead of our being able to return upon deck, all the other passengers were driven below, crowding both the cabin and hatch-way, so as to threaten us with the pains of suffocation. Every old chest and trunk now cracked with the weight of some one hastening down to escape from the rain; and, quickly, no less than seven or eight persons, were crowded into this contracted hole of spiders and vermin, committing depredations upon their net-work hangings, and tearing down the strong hammocks in which for years past, they had rested undisturbed. The whole host was thus put to flight. All the living things of the cabin seemed to be let loose in alarm. Numerous flocks of old spiders, overgrown cockroaches, rats, ants, and other travellers, ran distractedly about the births, kicking up their heels in our faces, and scampering, without ceremony, over every part of our persons.

Nor was this the worst of our troubles, for, on account of the rain, and from some of the creoles, who were stationed about the open-

ing, complaining of cold, we were exposed to the still greater annoyance—to the extreme peril of lying with the hatch-way closed. But this I felt it totally impossible to endure ; and therefore, loudly, and earnestly, entreated, that crowded and stifled as we were, we might not, on any account, be shut from the breeze. Possibly it might have proved an effectual expedient for relieving us from the vermin, and insects ; but, from being apprehensive of my own lungs, I was unwilling to hazard the experiment.

In a state truly deplorable did we pass a long and wearisome night. I had taken no food ; nausea still oppressed me ; my very bones ached ; my cold was severe ; my eyes were swollen from reaching, and from want of rest ; my head throbbed with pain ; the heat of the cabin was suffocating ; and I was almost expiring from want of air. With what anxiety did I wait the return of day ; and when grey morning stole in at the hatch-way, how joyfully did I hail its happy dawn !

My mind's eye now saw the fort of Berbische close a-head of the sloop, and I contem-



plated a speedy escape from all the perils and annoyances of the execrable Voltigeur. We had been under sail during the whole of the night, and it was no unreasonable flight of fancy to expect that we approached near to the end of the voyage. But the term of our sufferings was not thus soon to close. New vexations arose, and disappointment again presented its thorns. An old sailor, who had been employed to take his watch at the helm, during the night, had devoted to all subduing Morpheus, and steered the vessel a wrong course; from which accident we had now the mortification to find ourselves more distant from Berbische, than we had been in the evening. This was a cruel blow to my happiest expectations; and judging from the progress hitherto made, the warm hope of being soon on shore, was superseded by the fear of being detained another night on board.

One of the passengers, who, it proved, was the owner of the vessel, observing my solicitude, offered me consolation, by remarking that we were not far distant from an estate of his, upon the coast, and assuring me that if the vessel should not be able to reach Berbische in

the evening, rather than we should suffer such another night, he would take us all off in the boat to sleep at his house on shore. This was, indeed, a real comfort to me, and I supported the sickness and other ills of the day, in the full confidence of being, one way or other, relieved from them at night.

Our heavy sloop proceeded in dull movement, making slow progress, and scarcely regaining, during the whole of the day, the distance she had lost in the night. Evening again approached and our Captain saw no prospect of reaching Berbische. Finding this, the passengers upon deck kindly sent a message down into the cabin, informing me, that we were within sight of the estate, at which we were to sleep. This was happy news indeed ! The prospect of escaping from the detested Voltigeur, although but for a few hours, brought instant relief to my sickened stomach ! The afflicting nausea vanished, and, in high delight, I hastened from my hard bed of sickness to seek a sweeter birth on shore.

But vexation and disappointment were again our lot ; and no alleviating remission of

our sufferings was allowed. It was discovered that we were too far distant from the shore to go off in the boat; and moreover that it was the ebb of tide, which rendered it impossible that we could traverse the deep bank of mud, which extended from the water's edge to the land.

It was next debated whether it might answer our purpose to avail ourselves of the return of the tide, and of our nearer approach to the shore, at a later hour: but, again, our hopes were defeated, by the unexpected decline of the breeze, which most provokingly placed us upon the water in a dead calm. Presently the evening closed, and it growing suddenly dark, we were compelled to abandon the project, and to submit to the torture of passing another night on board.

As my next resource I resolved to avoid the poisonous stench and filth of the cabin, by pillow-ing my head upon the open deck until morning: but I found that my measure of vexation was not yet filled, for I was quickly chased from this well-aired couch, by the falling of heavy rain; and compelled to return to my nest of



spiders. As the evil was without a remedy, I hastened below, and, keeping on my clothes and shoes, tumbled in upon the bare boards I had left, cracking numbers of cockroaches, and other insects in my fall ; for the whole multitude of creeping things seemed to have met in congress in the birth, not expecting my return ; and in the alarm of sudden interruption some were crushed, while the others paced and scrambled their way over my person, even in greater droves than before.

The rain continued to fall, and from all the passengers again crowding into the cabin, we were close-stowed in confined and offensive heat, and passed another sadly wretched night : which to me was more distressing than the former, on account of my cold being somewhat relieved, and my olfactory powers in a slight degree restored. How anxiously did I wish to place an additional feather in the wing of time—how pray, ere the night had well commenced, that morning would again appear !

The few hours absence of light seemed quite an age ; for, annoyed and restless as I was,

through the night, sleep was a stranger to my eyes. Indeed had the soothing deity of repose invited me to his soft bowers, I should have refused the offering, in the apprehension that if I ceased to keep watch, I might lose a finger, either of the hand or the foot ; or be eaten in holes by the herds of hungry vermin, that were seeking to make a prey of my body. Comfortless, wearied, and with aching bones, I gladly greeted the return of day, and without dwelling upon minor ills, felt it fortunate to have preserved myself . . . . in a whole skin !

To prevent the accident of the preceding night, we had let go the anchor ; and, without the risk of steering away from our course, remained near the shore until the revolving sun again broke from the waters of the east to guide our path. It was now discovered that we had been lying near to the estate of our fellow passenger, where it was intended we should have slept ; and it also appeared that we were only a few hours run from Berbische ; and that, unless some new prevention occurred, we could not fail to complete our voyage in the course of the day.

But, unhappily, the proprietor of the vessel now desired to be set on shore, and we could not weigh anchor until the sailors, who went off with the boat should return. At 7 o'clock Mr. ——— took his departure from the vessel, carrying with him the other passengers, and leaving me to make the remainder of the voyage alone.

I before observed that these gentlemen brought no provisions on board ; and as my scanty stock had only served the mess for a single dinner, we had already been reduced to the negro diet of plantains and water for nearly two days. This had, hitherto, been no inconvenience to me, for my sickened stomach refused equally every kind of nourishment ; but my greatest distress arose from the other passengers having devoured every morsel of my fruit, while I was lying sick and ill below, not leaving me a shaddock, nor an orange, to moisten my lips, or cool my tongue.

On their leaving the sloop, I earnestly entreated them not to detain the boat a moment after they landed, lest we should be prevented from reaching Berbische by night.



They in reply assured me that it should not be delayed a minute beyond the time necessary for sending us "some fruit, and some provisions for the captain's dinner." But, incertitude was still the maxim of the fickle element, and stern ocean remitted not his unsteady and despotic rule. Instead of the boat coming back, directly, we were kept waiting the whole of the day, under an anxiety which it were more easy to conceive, than express.

The third night came on, and no boat appeared. Our situation was now tenfold more distressing than before. Without the men who went off with the boat, we had not hands enough to work the vessel. No remedy, therefore, remained, but to wait for them, however delayed their return. The mortification of having to pass another night in my offense den, was sadly aggravated by the vexation of lying at anchor, near to the place of destination, more than double the time that was required to complete the voyage; and if ever one day of twenty-four hours was longer than another it was surely this. Only one idea occupied the mind. The delayed return of the boat excluded every other contempla-

tion, and chaining our thoughts to a single link, the heavy languor of disappointed expectation lengthened a most wearisome day into more than a tedious week !

The poor captain, grown even more impatient than myself, became quite outrageous, and from no satisfactory cause explaining to his mind the detention of the boat, he sought not to restrain his rage, but kicked and stamped upon the deck, pouring forth dreadful sea oaths, in the full coarseness of broad Barbadoes dialect, and with all the emphasis of unbounded execration. His curses were really tremendous. They were unlike all that had before met my ear ; and were rendered doubly odious by the drawling accent in which they were pronounced.

Notwithstanding my determination to meet the rough and the smooth of life as they shall chance to fall in my path, this I confess was a day of trial to my philosophy. Being without food and drink, without society, or any other *agrement*, I was not able to beguile the slothful hours, either by conversation or the pleasures of the table ; and was even dis-

appointed in the hope of diverting my mind, from the fatigue of unremitted suspense, by reading. Intending to make the trial, I begged of the stamping, raving captain to shew me his library—Aye, exclaimed he, with a broad oath, that I can soon do ! And, in truth, so he might ; for it consisted only of an old mouldy copy of the sailor's *Vade mecum*, and the second volume of *The Tattler*, worm-eaten, and held together by a needleful of worsted. As I was not in humour with the sea, nor any thing appertaining thereto, I threw aside the musty old guide, and sat down to tattle with Mr. Bickerstaff, hoping in his society to forget the cares of the moment ; but still the boat—the *boat* annoyed me at every page, and I found it impossible to abstract my thoughts from the painful apprehension of passing another night on board the execrable Voltigeur. However, with sometimes tattling, sometimes thinking, and sometimes looking out, I contrived to wear away the torpid hours ; and, slow and dilatory as they had seemed, I found that the tedious day had too soon passed away ; for the cheering god of light again sunk into the western waves,—and no boat had arrived !



The vessel being at anchor, and near the shore, the motion was not considerable; and, consequently, the violent sickness and reaching, which had hitherto distressed me, were a little abated, and I remained, during the greater part of the day, upon deck; but as is common, at this season of the year, heavy rain again fell at night, and I was driven below to pass the hours of darkness amidst the filth and perils of my former retreat. Defending myself, as before, against the enemies that besieged me, I, very reluctantly, committed my person to their attack. My head ached severely; I was enfeebled and languid from former reaching, and the want of food; and every circumstance, around me, tended to rob me of rest. But exhausted nature sought relief. My eye-lids hung heavy, and did occasionally fall together; yet all repose was denied me, for no sooner was I off my guard, than I was again roused by formidable troops marching across my face and my person, and inflicting sharp wounds in order to drink my blood.

The poor enraged captain, bidding defiance to the showers, remained throughout

the greater part of the night swearing and stamping upon deck; and, in his watchful look-out for the boat, kept himself awake by pouring dread *Barbadian* curses upon the heads of those who detained it.

After a long and wearisome watching the eye of morning unclosed, and day again broke in at the opening of the cabin. Much rain had fallen during the night, but the sun smiled propitious through his morning robes, and seemed to offer cheerful greetings. With eager anxiety I sought tidings of our boat, but could obtain no intelligence regarding her. Neither was she arrived, nor in sight. The whole round of a day and night had passed, since she left us, and we were wholly lost in conjecture what could possibly detain her.

I now began to feel alarmed for my fellow-passengers, and soon became more anxious concerning their safety, than regarding the return of the boat. Something surely must have happened. The tide and the mud appeared no longer sufficient to explain the delay. Still had we no means of obtaining, nor even of seeking information, and it only re-

remained to us to continue the expectations of the preceding day, rendered far more anxious from our apprehensions respecting the fate of the gentlemen who had left us.

I had very early escaped from the cabin, and having exhausted all inquiries and conjectures, without discovering any possible remedy, it next became a question how to kill the heavy time. I had, already, travelled as far as *Finis* with Isaac Bickerstaff; and had nothing left in the shape of a book but the dirty worn-out *Vade mecum*: therefore, great as was my aversion to the sea, a seeming necessity drove me to separate the dirty pages of the old guide. A Dutch dictionary had been nearly as entertaining. I, nevertheless, laboured through latitudes and longitudes, and meridians, and altitudes, quite to the end; and still . . . . no boat appeared!

I, next, resumed my tattling with Mr. Bickerstaff, pursuing our conversation of yesterday, until about noon, when, to the great joy of all on board, our long-lost boat hove in sight. Both tattler and guide were instantly forgotten, and, leaping up, I asked, impul-



sively, if we had yet time to reach *Berbischo* by night. The captain assured me that we had ; and you will believe that we kept our eyes, stedfastly on the boat, wishing her ten-fold speed. At length, after an absence of thirty-two most tedious hours, she came safe alongside ; when we learned that no accident had occurred ; but that owing to the immense beds of drifted mud on the coast, and to the tide making against them, when they first *neared* the shore, all the party had been kept at sea in the open boat, exposed to the full ardor of a vertical sun, and without a morsel to eat, or a drop to drink, during the whole of the preceding day, from seven o'clock in the morning until ten at night : since which the boat had been kept on shore to give rest and refreshment to the poor sailors, who were cruelly exhausted with heat and fatigue.

Thus did it appear that there were situations even more distressing than being confined on board the odious *Voltigeur* ; for those who had gone off in the boat had been greater sufferers than myself. But I was surprized to find that men, who had so recently known the ills of privation, did not experience some

feelings of sympathy towards others. Although they knew that we were lying waiting in sad suspense, and without food or drink, except some stale plantains and bad water, notwithstanding the boat remained on shore full twelve hours after they landed, they had not the liberality—the compassion, I might say, to send off either a bit, or a drop to the master of the vessel, whom they had kept waiting; or to the person whose provisions they had eaten.

We could not but feel hurt at this neglect: but we recollected that they landed at night, and in a state of fatigue and discomfort but little calculated to extend their consideration beyond their own persons; and we hoped to feel it the less on account of speedily reaching the haven whither we were bound: but, as if the torments of this vexatious voyage were never to end, when the boat reached us, it was discovered that the tide did not serve for us to get under weigh; and, consequently, we were obliged to spend two hours of more tedious waiting than all that had passed, before we could open our sails to the wind. At length the boat, being hauled up astern, and

the tide serving, we again stood out to sea ; the captain assuring me that we still had sufficient time to reach Berbische by sun-set. Knowing her talent for sailing, I had strong doubts of this ; but did not deem it wise to discourage the commander by condemning his vessel. The fact probably, would, too soon explain itself.

The wind was not in our favor, and on my first venturing to ask how we came on, I learned that we were about half a league *further from port* than when we were lying at anchor. Still I was enough a sailer to have this explained to my satisfaction, by the observation that it was necessary to *stand well out*, in order to *fetch the river upon the next tack*. But very soon after, on attempting to *bring the vessel about*, new perplexities arose. The Voltigeur disobeyed the helm, and would not *veer to the wind*. In the sailor's language, she would neither *tack nor wear*, but remained fixed like a log upon the water. I stood equally fixed, observing all that passed, without hazarding a syllable of remark ; for, however bad a vessel may be, and however much her captain may abuse her, himself, still every



commander is so tenacious regarding the vessel under his direction, that it were treason for any other person to speak of her as a bad sailer.

The poor captain now stamped and swore worse than ever; and I had a full opportunity of hearing the whole catalogue of vulgar sea-oaths, delivered in the broadest Creole dialect. He cursed the vessel's eyes, her heart, and her sides—uttered dreadful oaths upon her head, her soul, and her liver, and after loading her with all the dreadful imprecations that vulgar rage could invent, he completed the climax, by exclaiming to the sailors “*d—her, cut her old throat, d—— her!*”

After much exertion, and a varied repetition of oaths, and enraged stampings upon the deck, the vessel was brought about, and we stood in for the shore, sailing for a short time in steady approach to the river; but within less than a short half-hour, the bright prospect, which had so recently opened to us, was again obscured, by the Voltigeur striking upon the mud, and being nearly fixed aground. Fortunately she *went about* on this tack, with

greater facility than the other, and hence, by putting her round, she was soon set afloat again: but it was now necessary to stand away, and make a long reach, from the shore, in order to get into deep water. This would necessarily delay our arrival, yet still the captain insisted that we should reach Berbische at night. But upon my next inquiry respecting our progress I found that this was not very probable, for we were then six miles *further off* than when the boat came to us in the morning.

Soon afterwards all hands were summoned, and “*about, about,*” re-echoed throughout the sloop. But the vexatious Voltigeur again resisted. She had a sad antipathy to the Berbische river, and on their attempting to tack for the shore, she refused to turn her head that way. The poor captain, who had carefully stationed every man at his post, and prepared, with all due care, for putting her about, grew almost frantic. He stamped and raved, and swore with all the bitterness of unbridled wrath; and, having gone through all his volume of oaths, he threw himself down, exhausted by his exertions and his fury, ex-

claiming—" *Dammee if we shall get in to-night, for she'll neither wag one way nor t'other.*" For this I was not unprepared, my expectations for some hours previous, having been of accord with the information: and although the epithets of old, rotten and leaky, used by the infuriated captain, were, from all appearance, very correctly true, I was grown too resigned, or too callous to all the ills of my situation, to experience any feelings of alarm respecting our safety.

After some delay the vessel did *come about*, and we again stood on, boldly, for the land, making all possible sail, the master and his crew not despairing of being able to reach Berbische by night. But, as if the very fates had combined with the elements, to throw every obstacle in the way of our passage, the breeze suddenly dropped, and we were beset in a calm! Against this impediment neither the oaths of the commander, nor the exertions of the sailors could ought avail. The captain who had already opened his whole store of imprecations was about to repeat them with manful energy, but, recollecting himself, he bestowed one round curse



upon the wind and the passage, and as a closing exclamation cried out—“ *D—n the old tub, it is not her fault neither—there is not a thimbleful of wind! Dammee if we shall get in this week!*”

Thus ended the sailing of the day, and we again let go our anchor for the night. The poor harassed man now became more tranquil, and I took courage to address him in conversation, when I learned, that after all the fatigue and exertions of the day, we were further from Berbische than we had been the preceding night; but that we had the advantage of lying in deeper water, and, consequently, were better situated for availing ourselves of the morning breeze.

I resumed my hard birth, protected as before, and bade defiance to the many companions of my nest. Nausea had distressed me throughout the day, and the restored power of my olfactories was not in favor of its removal. The very severe reaching had ceased, but the want of food, and the extreme heat of the atmosphere rendered me feeble and languid: yet I was more comfort-

less than ill, and seemed only to require rest to relieve me from personal sufferings. Unhappily this was denied me, and, in nausea, and discomfort, I rolled out the tedious hours of night.

The fifth morning of this wretched voyage was serene and clear, and I left my sleepless couch at an early hour to breathe a purer air upon deck; when, upon looking out, I perceived an island not far distant, and lying directly in our course. From the sailors I learned that it was within the mouth of the river Berbische. This was happy intelligence, and seemed to promise a speedy termination of our teemful voyage. When the captain came upon deck, he greeted me with a broad oath, assuring me that I should breakfast at Fort William Frederic. I wished it might be so: indeed all seemed now within our reach, and it appeared to be scarcely possible that any new impediment could interrupt the completion of our passage; but the experience we had had was sufficient to create doubts in the mind of the most sanguine, and to temper his warmest expectations to the sobriety of tardy and interrupted accomplishment—nay, to convince him

that the uncertainties of a sea voyage could never end until the foot was again upon *terra firma*. If any stronger conviction of this fact could have been required, it had been amply supplied to my mind by what followed.

At seven o'clock we weighed anchor, and immediately made all possible sail, with the island displaying its thick woods, directly ahead of the sloop, and forming a very pleasing object. As we came nearer to it, I observed that it was situated about the middle of the river, and nearly opposite to the landing place at the fort. All seemed now propitious, and we sailed smoothly on: but we had yet to experience a further trial of patience! An hour had not passed, from the time of our getting under weigh, before our progress was completely arrested by the Voltigeur again striking upon the mud. "*By Heav'ns,*" exclaimed the captain, "*she's aground! This is worse than ever!*" All his vexations were now cruelly aggravated by the mortification of his pride, in consequence of being seen from the fort; and he ran, stamped, stormed, and cursed in loud bursts of rage, which out-did all his former doings. I felt the less annoyed by this



additional delay, from the opportunity it afforded me of contemplating the scene before us—more particularly as the vessel could not suffer any injury from her soft bed, and as we were near enough to reach the shore in the boat, even should any accident render it necessary for us to quit the sloop. The best exertions of the crew were of no avail—fixed in the mud we were compelled to let go the anchor, and wait until the flood of tide should again set us afloat.

The view before us was that of a wild country, only just opening into cultivation. It comprized an extent of wood and water, with small patches of land breaking into incipient tillage, but it had nothing of the bold and romantic scenery of mountainous regions. The picture was soft and harmonious. We were lying a few miles out at sea, looking directly up the river; the quiet waters of which were stealing, in tranquil stream, to the ocean. No part of the territory of the island was visible, but from being flat and low, it appeared a mere cluster of trees, growing out of the water, and causing a pleasant break in the wide embouchure of the river. On the

right was the western shore covered with one mass of heavy forest, whose gigantic timbers, gradually elevating their crowded summits from the water's edge, formed one wide expanse of interminable verdure, which fancy might easily have converted into a green field of immense extent, gently sloping to the water. On the left was the eastern shore, shaded also with deep forests ; but, on this side, the river's bank was partially thinned of its woods—and presented to our view the fort and batteries, with a deep savanna at the back of them. I gazed in earnest contemplation upon the solemn wildness of the scene, and lamented not the accident which had so peculiarly placed it before me. For a moment my mind was wholly abstracted from every thing directly around me, and rambling in the society of the wild men, the monkies, and other animals that inhabit *the bush*, I was totally lost amidst these vast and unbounded forests. But I was quickly interrupted from my reverie and recalled from the endless woods, by a loud cry of “ *All hands to heave the anchor.*” The tide had supplied us with water to float the sloop, and we lost no time in attempting to escape from our muddy birth.

The vessel now stood directly into the mouth of the river, and, being careful to keep the middle of the stream, we again felt secure of our passage. But the fates had not yet sufficiently schooled us in adversity. Before we had time to reach the fort the wind dropped, and, from the vessel disobeying the helm, we again drifted aground. This was worse than all; and the poor captain now swore that "*the very devil himself must have set his spell upon the vessel!*"

We were again compelled to let go the anchor, in order to wait the return of the breeze. Being near to the island and the fort, I might have gone on shore in the boat, but I could not venture to ask our angry commander to spare any of his men for that purpose. I had often, before, seen him expend his wrath without presuming to interrupt him. It was now increased to frenzy, and he loudly vociferated—" *There is some daamm devil in the ship that's bringing us this passage, and we must heave him overboard, or we shan't get in this month.*" It was perilous to speak to him, and, if any thing I might say should chance to cross him, it was not certain but, in the over-



flowings of his rage, he might fix upon me as the "*Jonas*," and deem it expedient to take his measures accordingly. At all events it was necessary to keep out of the way, in order not to interrupt him or his men in working the vessel; I therefore remained below, during the high tide of his ravings and stampings, shewing my head only at the hatch-way, like an unhappy object peeping out of a prison.

We remained for a considerable time deep fixed in mud. Luckily the meridian sun approached with a fine breeze in his suite, and we were once more set afloat, when we were quickly placed alongside the battery at St. Andrew's fort, and I most gladly jumped on shore, rejoicing in the termination of a voyage which had been harassing and vexatious, beyond all that the most ill-tokened calculation could have anticipated. Never was poor suffering prisoner more happy in being released from long confinement, than I was to escape from my noisome abode in the *Voltigeur*. During four sad long days, and four still more wearisome nights had I been immured in the filthiest of all filthy dungeons, ill, and in a

manner without food or support, having only the repetition of bad plantains every day for breakfast, for dinner, and for supper.

I was met at the water's edge by Mr. Mackie, the acting surgeon of the garrison, who kindly conducted me to an apartment, where I could cast off my sea garments, and submit my person to the purifying process of a complete ablution. Few, perhaps, would have wished for my birth on board the wretched *Voltigeur*—but all might have envied me the luxury of my bath on leaving it ! I cannot tell you how delightful—how grateful it was ! The adult baptism of the most devoted bigot could not be more enchanting. It was in truth the water of holiness. It refreshed, it animated,—nay, inspired me ! I felt new life, and certainly was . . . . . *a very different being* ! On landing I had been sick and comfortless, with my head dizzy, my knees trembling, and my whole frame enfeebled : but, after my ablution, I felt born a-new ; my strength returned ; I was no longer sick ; a general glow of health and freshness was diffused over me, and I became the creature of . . . . . *a new world* !

## LETTER XIX.

*Situation of Fort William Frederic. Indians, tigers, monkeys, and parrots inhabit the surrounding woods. A town, to be called New Amsterdam, building upon the banks of the rivers Berbische and Kannye. Dutch garrison-hospital at Berbische fitted up by the author. Ninety-third regiment in garrison at Fort William Frederic. Excellent discipline of this regiment under Lieutenant-Colonel Gammell. Author afflicted with a complaint in his legs. A soldier drowned in bathing. Remarks occasioned by the sorrowful effect of the accident upon his comrades. Examination after a case of yellow fever. Author intends to pursue his inquiries respecting the diseased appearances. Written opinions regarding the yellow fever very discordant.*

Berbische, June 3.

FORT St. Andrew is situated on the eastern bank of the river Berbische, opposite to the island which graces its entrance. It appears isolated from the colony, and from the world: no house nor building of any kind—nothing bearing the semblance of the abode of man is within sight of it: nor is there any way of escaping from it, either on foot, in a carriage, or on horseback; the river being the



only private path, and the only public road. At the back of the fort is a deep and wild savanna, giving habitation to enormous snakes, alligators, loud-roaring frogs, and other reptiles. This naked waste extends to a great distance, and is bordered by dark forests, which reach near to the fort, and preclude every view except of the water and the flat uncultivated savanna. In these woods wild Indians range wide and free. Sometimes also tigers are seen prowling from their deep shades; and our ears are daily and almost hourly saluted with the loud chattering of monkies, the horrid screaming of parrots, and the confused noise of numerous other inhabitants.

The fort is calculated for the accommodation of between two and three hundred men. The territory attached to it is scarcely more extensive than the buildings, and the whole garrison is confined to a circle of less than half a mile; the only promenade, without the gates, being from the barrack to the hospital, and back from the hospital to the barrack, a distance of little more than a hundred yards. A short path has, indeed, been opened into the savanna, which forms a very limited walk,

in the time of the dry season, only. A few of the government negroes, who are employed at the fort, have constructed small huts at the back of the hospital, which call to my remembrance the cottagers' cabins I have seen in the Highlands of Scotland. At these habitations, we sometimes witness the joyous dance—and have our ears regaled with the sound of the rude African drum, the rattle, and the banjar.

Beyond the immediate precincts of the fort we do not find any human abode, without making a journey of, at least, a mile and half by water. At that distance is now forming the town of Amsterdam, the new capital of the colony. Between the fort and the town the river Kannye opens into the great Berbische river; and between the Kannye and the fort, the border of the parent river is still covered with the wild woods: but these are now doomed to the axe, and soon a road will be opened upon the bank of the river Berbische to the river Kannye, and from the opposite shore of that river to the town. This will be a great, and desirable improvement. It will at once relieve the wildness of the situation, and

scenery of the fort, form a convenient promenade, for horse and foot, and remove the dull solitude of the garrison, by establishing a more ready intercourse with the capital.

The town is yet in embryo. According to a plan formed for its construction it is to be built upon the angle, or peninsula, between the rivers Berbische and Kannye, extending along the bank of the former. The land on which it is to be erected is in part cleared of its wood, and divided into lots ready for building ; but, at present, only here and there a scattered house is to be seen. Beyond the prepared land, and not half a mile from the Government house, the wild forest still overhangs the river Kannye ; but those powerful engines the destructive axe and all-subduing fire are now directed against it, and consequently it cannot long remain—a forest.

The whole scenery at New Amsterdam, as well as at Fort William Frederic, betrays the infant state of the colony. The dreariness of the land, just robbed of its thick woods—the nakedness that prevails around the Government house—the want of roads and paths—



the wild savanna—the heavy forests ; in short all that meets the eye conveys the idea of a country just emerging from its original wildness, into cultivation.

Since my arrival in this colony my hours have been busily occupied in attending the sick, and establishing regulations and arrangements for their accommodation. We have a garrison-hospital, built by the Dutch, which is tolerably commodious, and, with a few alterations, may probably serve for the present garrison. The Hollanders, without any regard to climate, had preserved their European custom of placing the sick, two or three together, in a species of box, with high enclosed sides, instead of keeping them separated, and giving them the advantages of air and cleanliness, by placing them upon bedsteads.

I have directed that all these confined and offensive bed-boxes should be removed, and have given orders to have some bedsteads made upon a new construction, which I trust will prove both convenient and comfortable. They will consist merely of four short posts, those at the top a little longer than those at the bot-

tom, and two side rails, fitted together with wooden pins, and so contrived as to be conveniently taken to pieces, and packed in a portable form, in case we should at any time wish to remove them. They will be made of mahogany, a wood which is so plentiful in these colonies as to be employed for every common use. A piece of strong canvass, stretched from side to side, will form the bedding ; a head-board will slide into grooves in the two upper posts, and the side-rails will move up and down in an opening cut through them, and be fastened with pins, so as to be at any time raised or lowered at the head, without disturbing the patient. When these are finished, I hope to see a very complete hospital, and the unfortunate sick will at least have the comfort of being well lodged. Each will have his mahogany bedstead to himself, and men with different maladies will not be crowded together in filthy boxes, nor shut up from the refreshing air.

The 93d Regiment is entrusted with the protection and defence of this colony ; and I find the officers' mess one of the pleasantest I have yet met with. In gratitude I ought to

tell you that the whole of the officers emulate their commander in kind and friendly attentions towards to me. Indeed I cannot but be strongly sensible of the many marks of politeness and civility with which I am daily honored. Most of the officers are men of cultivated manners. Among them are several of considerable fortune, and some of rank—men who are not only well-disciplined soldiers, but well-bred gentlemen ; being no less versed in the polished rules of civil, than in the austere observances of a military life. The general order and decorum which mark their conduct afford the surest indication of correct discipline, and offer the most convincing proof of the high advantage derived from serving under a strict, but respected commanding-officer. Colonel Gammell, while he suffers no remission of duty, is affable and pleasant towards those under his command. He treats them as companions, and seeks to engage their affection and esteem. The soldiers consider him severe; but he is their friend, and the majority of them are not insensible of it. We frequently overhear the conversations and remarks of those about the hospital regarding him, and they always terminate very much to his credit ; for if one



calls him rigorous or severe, another instantly contrasts what they regard as his better qualities, saying " why to be sure he is a little *close upon us*, and *keeps us to it* ; but then you know it is for our own advantage ; and, besides, how good he is to us when we are sick ! You see he keeps these doctors to their duty, too. He comes to see us himself every day, and makes them give us plenty of every thing that's good for us ; and 't isn't all officers do that you know ! Some of 'em are more afraid of an hospital than a cannon ball, and never care whether we die or live !"

In this way their remarks usually go to the approval of the Colonel's conduct towards them ; and like good soldiers, they acknowledge their esteem for a commander who, by imposing a strict routine of duty, gives them cause to pride themselves upon a degree of pre-eminence in point of health and discipline.

Among the many ills of climate, I am now suffering from a teasing eruption which has thrown itself out upon my legs ; a com-

plaint which I find has lately been prevalent among the troops in this colony, although we had not observed any thing of it at Demarara. It is more severe than the prickly heat, but somewhat of the same nature ; and is, perhaps, only an aggravated degree of that disease. It creates an uneasy sensation, not amounting to severe pain, but sufficient to rob me of rest.

I am sorry to note to you that we had the misfortune to lose one of the soldiers the morning after my arrival at Berbische, from his going into deep water in bathing, and not being able to swim. Several of his comrades, and also some negroes, who saw him sink, swam instantly to the spot, and dived to the bottom in search of him, but without success. He was drowned and probably carried away by the stream. The next morning the body was found floating upon the surface of the river very near to the fort. I mention this accident the more particularly from having marked its effect upon the minds of the soldiers of the garrison, and having observed that the accidental death of an individual operates with, precisely, similar influence upon the feelings of men actually engaged in war, as of peo-

ple occupied in the peaceful round of civil life. Most persons witness, or even read the account of any one being murdered, or killed by accident, with sentiments of horror and distress; while the detail of hundreds being slain by the sword scarcely excites a passing regret.

Similar feelings are evinced by the soldiers! More of sorrow and consternation prevailed in the garrison, from the accidental loss of a single comrade, than, probably, would have been expressed, by the same men, had thousands been killed, before them, upon the field of battle! You will be able to explain how it is that death, in the one case, should beget such terrors, while, in the other, it scarcely excites a momentary impression. We shudder with horror, and are loaded with grief at the loss of an individual; yet the destruction of thousands scarcely robs the bosom of a sigh!

The second day after my arrival at Berbische I had the unhappy opportunity of inspecting the body of a soldier who had fallen a sacrifice to yellow fever. The appearances were similar to those I had witnessed



at Demarara, except that, in the present instance, there were some striking marks of inflammation within the thorax. I shall further avail myself of the painful occasions that may occur, during my stay in this colony, in order that we may compare the cases with such as may be examined at Demarara during my absence, and after my return, in the hope that we may, thereby, be enabled to judge, with more accuracy, regarding the general appearances, and the actual changes induced by the disease. "Heavens!" Methinks I hear you exclaim, "the man speaks as though he expected the grim tyrant to wield his scythe amongst them, with wide-stretched arm." Would it were not so! but, feeling that the relentless destroyer must sometimes defeat us, I should deem it a culpable neglect not to endeavour to reap those professional advantages from his ravages, which may enable us the better to defend others from his hungry grasp. I may candidly acknowledge that although, together with my colleagues, I have been zealous to procure every work written upon the subject, and have devoted my spare time to reading the various authors, and contemplating all that has been said upon the dis-

ease called *Yellow fever*, I have been hitherto very undecided, and have had my opinion altogether afloat, respecting its nature. From experience, and examination of the diseased appearances, I may hope for more accurate elucidation, and perhaps be enabled to arrive at some general maxim, which, in vain, I have looked for in the discordant opinions of the ingenious men who have devoted their pens to this great—this interesting, and most important subject.

## LETTER XX.

*A Dutch "vendue" of slaves. Attended by the colonists like a public fair. Quite a holyday or gala-meeting. Manner of exposing the slaves by auction. Method of examining them. Their average value. Conduct of a negro who was put up to the hammer without his wife. Author conducts his friend from African slaves to free Indians. Joins a party of Indians near the river Kannye. Indifference of these people concerning the whites. Another party pack up their furniture and utensils, and return into the woods. The women bear the burden. Indians engage to cut wood, but cannot be relied on. They have no industry—nor any desire to emulate the colonists. A party from the woods come down the river in a canoe to Fort St. Andrew.*

Berbische, June.

SINCE writing to you last I have been present at the sale of a Dutch cargo of slaves, at the new town of Amsterdam. Many of the officers went from the fort to witness this degrading spectacle, and although my feelings had suffered from a similar scene at Demarara, I could not resist the novelty of observing the Dutch mode of proceeding in this sad traffic of human cattle.



On arriving at the town, we were surprized to find it quite a holyday, or a kind of public fair. The sale seemed to have excited general attention, and to have brought together all the inhabitants of the colony. The planters came down from the estates with their wives and families all arrayed in their gayest apparel : the belles and beaux appeared in their Sunday suits : even the children were in full-dress ; and their slaves decked out in holyday clothes. It was quite a gala-day, and greater numbers of people were collected than we had supposed to have been in the colony. Short jackets, with tawdry wide-flowered petticoats, and loose Dutch slippers formed the prevailing dress of the females. Scarlet, crimson, and poppy, with all the bright colours used in a northern winter, rivalled a tropical sun, and reigned conspicuous in the flaming broad-patterned petticoat. To the inhabitants it seemed a day of feasting and hilarity, but to the poor Africans it was a period of heavy grief and affliction ; for they were to be sold as beasts of burden—torn from each other—and widely dispersed about the colony, to wear out their days in the hopeless toils of slavery.

The fair being opened, and the crowd assembled, these unpitied fable beings were exposed to the hammer of public auction. A long table was placed in the middle of a large room, or logis. At one end was seated the auctioneer: at the other was placed a chair for the negroes to stand upon, in order to be exposed to the view of the purchasers; who were sitting at the sides of the table, or standing about the different parts of the room. All being in readiness, the slaves were brought in, one at a time, and placed upon the chair before the bidders, who handled and inspected them, with as little concern as if they had been examining cattle in Smithfield market. They turned them about, felt of them, viewed their shape and their limbs, looked into their mouths, made them jump and throw out their arms, and subjected them to all the means of trial as if dealing for a horse, or any other brute-animal. Indeed the indelicacy shewn towards the poor defenceless Africans, by some of these dealers in their species, was not less unmanly and disgusting than it was insulting to humanity.

We were shocked to observe women in

the room who had come to the fair for the express purpose of purchasing slaves. Nay, even children were brought to point the lucky finger, and the boy or girl, thus chosen, was bought by papa at the request of superstitious mama, to give to young massa or missy !

The price of these poor degraded blacks varied from 600 to 900 guilders, according to their age and strength, or their appearance of being healthy or otherwise. The boys and girls were sold for 600 or 700 guilders—some of the men fetched as high as 900—and the women were knocked down at about 800.

In the course of the sale, a tall and robust negro, on being brought into the auction-room, approached the table with a fine negress hanging upon his arm. The man was ordered to mount the chair. He obeyed, though manifestly with reluctance. His bosom heaved, and grief was in his eye. The woman remained in the crowd. A certain price was mentioned to set the purchase forward, and the bidding commenced : but on the slave being desired to exhibit the activity of his limbs, and to display his person, he sunk his



chin upon his breast, and hung down his head in positive refusal—then, looking at the woman, made signs expressive of great distress. Next he pointed to her, and then to the chair, evidently intimating that he desired to have her placed by his side. She was his chosen wife, and nature was correctly intelligible. Not obtaining immediate acquiescence, he became agitated and impatient. The sale was interrupted, and as he could not be prevailed upon to move a single muscle by way of exhibiting his person, the proceedings were at a stand. He looked again at the woman,—again pointed to the chair,—held up two fingers to the auctioneer, and implored the multitude in anxious suppliant gestures. Upon his countenance was marked the combined expression of sorrow, affection, and alarm. He grew more and more restless, and repeated signs which seemed to say—“Let us be sold together. Give me my heart’s choice as the partner of my days, then dispose of me as you please, and I will be content to wear out my life in the heavy toils of bondage.” It was nature that spake—and her language could not be mistaken! Humanity could no longer resist the appeal, and it was universally agreed that they

should make but one lot. A second chair was now brought, and the woman was placed at the side of her husband. His countenance instantly brightened. He hung upon the neck of his wife, and embraced her with rapture—then folding her in his arms, and pressing her to his bosom, he became composed; and looked round with a smile of complacency, which plainly said “proceed!—I am yours, yours, or yours! Let this be the associate of my toils, and I am satisfied.” The bidding was renewed! They exhibited marks of health and strength, and, quickly, the two were sold together for 1650 guilders.

“Enough!”—you will say. “Give me no more of slaves, nor of slavery!”—For the present I obey, and, leaving the dusky Africans, proceed to introduce you to the copper-colored Indians; thus, leading you to the opposite extreme of human life, and placing you among those of our species, who spurn alike the shackles of slavery, and the slavish trammels of society. I have lately had an opportunity of seeing several parties of the wild and naked inhabitants of these woods—men who range, at large, in the fullest free-

dom. of nature ; neither suffering their liberty to be effaced by bondage, nor abridged by civilization. Being one day at the town of New Amsterdam with the acting surgeon of the garrison, we took a walk down to the Bush \*, on the border of the creek or river Kannye. Nigh to the water we met with a party of Indians, and observing that they made no attempt to avoid us, we went so near to them as to mix in the group. We found them engaged in various pursuits ; and remarked that none of their occupations suffered any interruption from our presence. A woman and her son, who were in the river, continued to bathe before us, and seemed greatly to enjoy the water. Some were cutting wood for firing—some collecting the Bush-water † with a calabash, for the purpose of drinking, or of cooking—some, with their pot of baked clay upon the fire, were stewing crabs, together with capsicum and cassada juice into pepper pot—and some were eating the raw tops of the mountain cabbage. To the latter I held

\* Upon this coast the forest is termed the *Bush*.

† The rain water which lodges in the low parts of the forest.



forth my hand implying a desire to partake of their repast. They immediately gave me a part; and seemed pleased on observing me eat of it. A better fallad I never tasted. It was very crisp and white—much superior to the best lettuce or endive; and, in flavour, somewhat resembling the filbert. Perceiving that they were not incommoded by our society, we remained a considerable time attentively watching their proceedings; but their curiosity was not commensurate with our own, for they scarcely looked at us, or appeared to be, in any degree, interested concerning us. With indifference they saw us approach—they regarded us with indifference whilst we remained—and with indifference they witnessed our departure.

Two days after, I saw a much larger party of Indians, who came to the Government house to ask for rum, as a compensation for cutting down timber: and the same evening, on walking towards the creek with some of the officers, we met with a still more numerous body of these inhabitants of the forest, who had been employed by the Governor to cut down wood preparatory to clearing the

land near the town for cultivation. They were busied in packing up all their little store of implements and utensils, in order to return to their native abode in the woods. Bows and arrows, apparatus for preparing cassada, the clay cooking-vessel, hammocks, calabashes, and crab-baskets constituted their whole list of stores and furniture. All these were light in structure, or made of light materials, and, being arranged in compact order, were easily carried on their backs. The women were made to bear the burden; while the men took no share of the load. One man, who had three wives, very neatly packed upon their backs, the whole of what he had to carry away; then taking up a long staff, he marched on before with lordly step, the wives following him in silent train, one after another. We walked gently behind a party of about forty as far as the creek, and there saw some of them embark in their canoes, and paddle up the river, while the others took a narrow path leading into the depths of the forest; and presently the whole body of them were out of sight, leaving not a trace of their visit behind.

They come down, occasionally, in parties, and enter into an engagement to cut wood for a certain compensation ; but no dependence can be placed upon them for a single day, for they sometimes pack up all belonging to them, and return suddenly and unexpectedly into the woods ; from whence they come not again for several months, perhaps not at all. They are naturally indolent, and, being tenacious of freedom, they become impatient of the restraint imposed by daily labour ; wherefore, they hastily cast it off, and fly back to the woods to range in their native liberty, which knows no bounds, nor controul. From possessing a degree of expertness in the felling of timber, they might be highly useful in forwarding the cultivation of the colony, but they have no sense of industry, nor do they seem to acquire the least disposition to emulate the colonists in any of their pursuits :—content with finding food and pepper in the woods, they have no ambition to become planters. Cotton is not necessary to protect their naked skins ; nor are their appetites so refined as to require either coffee or sugar.



At the fort we have also had a visit from an Indian family, who came to us in the true style of native accommodation—exhibiting the full equipage of the family canoe, and forming a scene of high interest and novelty. Before the canoe reached the fort, we observed the long black hair and naked skins of the man, his two wives, and several children, who were all stowed about the vessel with the strictest attention to equipoise—*trimming* it most exactly. The canoe was large, and, in addition to the family, was loaded with cedar and other kinds of wood for sale or barter. On the top of the cargo appeared a ferocious-looking animal, setting up his bristles like the quills of the porcupine. It was a species of wild hog caught in the forest, and hence called a *bush-hog*. A small monkey was likewise skipping about the canoe. At one side sat two very fine parrots, and on the other was perched a large and most beautiful mackaw, exhibiting all the rich splendour of his gay plumage. On the canoe arriving at the landing place, the bow and arrows, the clay cooking-vessel, calabashes, hammocks, and crab-baskets, were all brought into view, and we gazed on the whole, as forming a very com-

plete and striking specimen of original equipage, and accommodation. The whole family—the household apparatus—the bow and arrows—the canoe and paddles—the hammocks—in short all the furniture and implements for cooking, for sleeping, for shooting, fishing, and travelling were here moved together in one compact body, so as to render it indifferent to them, whether they should return to the home from whence they came, or take up a new abode in any other part of the forest.

## LETTER XXI.

*Politeness and hospitality of Governor Van Battenburg towards the author. The Government-house. Its situation and construction. Excursion up the creek or river Kannye. Estate of Mynheer Ongre. Its produce in coffee—in cocoa. Number and value of the slaves. Mode of preparing cocoa and chocolate. Food, drink, plates, dishes, medicine, and clothing all grow in the fields. Berbische widely remote from headquarters. Uncertainty of receiving news from the army. Route by which it commonly reaches Berbische. Brave conduct of a black corps at St. Lucie. The gallant Colonel Malcolm falls at their head. Uncertain of remaining in Guiana, the author directs his letters to be sent to St. Domingo. Garrison not unmindful of the 4th of June. Enchanting echo through the heavy forests.*

Berbische, June.

I HAVE lately had opportunities of making several boat excursions, with Colonel Gammell and others of the officers, to New Amsterdam, and have had the honor of being presented to Governor and Madame Van Battenburg, of whose hospitable and polite attentions I cannot express myself in sufficient terms of praise. They have kindly invited me to take up my abode at the government-house, during my



stay in the colony, but I have to lament that my duties at the hospital will not allow me to avail myself of so flattering and agreeable an accommodation.

The government-house is, beyond all comparison, the handsomest and most spacious edifice I have yet seen in South America. It is built near to the river, with one front commanding the water—the other the town. At the entrance is a handsome flight of steps, leading to a spacious hall, which extends across the building, throughout its whole depth. At the upper end of the hall an open double stair-case leads up to another large room, which also runs across the centre of the building, having the windows of one end looking to the town, and those of the other to the river. At the sides of this room, and opening into it, are the different apartments occupying the four angles of the building.

From this construction a free current of air is preserved in the great central room, and all the other apartments, by communicating with it, are kept pleasantly cool.

A few days ago I joined a small party from the fort, in an excursion to some of the planters' estates up the river Kannye, and was particularly gratified in viewing the rich plantation of Mynheer Ongre. We breakfasted and set off at an early hour, in order to have the day before us, and arrived at this gentleman's abode just as he was sitting down to his Dutch breakfast of very excellent crab soup, some fine fish, a tongue, and a variety of other good things. It is the custom of the Dutch to take coffee in bed, or as soon as they rise, and to make a more substantial breakfast of soup and solids about ten o'clock. After partaking of this repast, we were conducted about the estate, which is rich and well cultivated, yielding abundance of coffee, cocoa, and some cotton. The annual produce of coffee is estimated at 140,000lb. weight, and of cocoa 10,000lb. Two hundred slaves are employed upon the estate, calculated at the value of from 50l. to 100l. each. The house is handsome and spacious—the plantation extensive, and the coffee elogia upon a very large scale: the whole exhibiting the appearance of fertility and opulence. Having visited the fields of coffee, and the cocoa plantation, we next went

to the logis, where we saw the cocoa seeds exposed for drying, preparatory to their being made into chocolate; and, also, great quantities of coffee undergoing the last process, previous to being sent to market. It was the first extensive plantation of cocoa I had seen, and, in witnessing the mode of preparing this into chocolate, I could not but notice that what is commonly used as cocoa, in England, is only the shell or outer covering of the seed—the kernel, or true cocoa being used for making the chocolate. If, therefore, you should wish to drink cocoa, remember you can only have it good by boiling chocolate thin and weak, the common cocoa being no other than the husks or sweepings, which cannot be used in preparing the chocolate.

At another estate we were regaled with fruit, and some pines were put into the boat, when we were going away. Here we also pulled from the trees some calabashes of uncommon size, to take home with us to use by way of bowls and platters. We likewise gathered some roots of jalap from under the hedges, and observed the ipecacuanha growing in the fields. Thus, you find, that however



shut from the world, we can neither want fruit, food, nor physic; for the hedges, the fields, and the gardens amply supply them all—drink, clothing, and condiment we also collect from the trees, the plants, and the bushes; and, in the calabash, bountiful nature has even furnished us with plates, basons and dishes.

We are here so removed from the headquarters of the army, that I scarcely know which would be most reasonable . . . . . for you to expect news of its operations from Berbische, or for me to ask tidings of its proceedings from England! No direct or regular communication is established, and the little intercourse continued between us is highly uncertain and precarious. The intelligence that reaches us is most commonly accidental, and in its circuitous route, it is new-modelled, by such a variety of reporters, and becomes so garbled and disfigured, that too frequently it preserves scarcely any features of accuracy. From the army it travels to some ship, and is transported to Barbadoes. There, perhaps, it takes a long rest, or wanders over the island. Next it is picked up in the streets, in a distorted form, by some trading captain, or his

failors, and carried to Demarara. There it strays again throughout the colony, and is tortured and mangled, until, its mutilated remains being thrown into some chance boat, it is finally sent to receive the rites of sepulture at Berbische !

We have just heard that the troops of the black corps, which we saw at Barbadoes, have behaved with great spirit and bravery at St. Lucie : but that the gallant Colonel Malcolm, having unhappily been killed at the head of them, they were repulsed, from an attack of the Vigie, at the very moment when victory was declaring in their favor. It is also said that the 37th regiment has suffered very considerably ; but the gazette will have given you a more correct account of the attack and its result long before this letter can reach you ; still it may serve to shew how late and defective the intelligence comes to us from the great body of the army. It is further reported that General Whyte is gone down to St. Domingo, and that the detachment of the hospital department, remaining in these colonies, is soon to follow. This confirms the uncertainty of my situation, and renders it difficult for me

to receive tidings from you or any other friends in England. Perhaps it were best to address to me at the head-quarters of the St. Domingo army ; then I may chance, some day or other, to receive the letters ; but if they are sent to Guiana, I may be relieved before they arrive, and they may never overtake me.

Although we had not the usual incitements of a sumptuous dinner and a splendid ball, we were not unmindful that the 4th inst. was a day of rejoicing. The troops fired a *feu de joie* ; and a royal salute sounded through the thick woods from the fort, and from an armed schooner which was lying in the river. Bumpers were filled to his majesty's health, and we were merry and happy as you who are revelling in all the luxuries of London. One treat was added to our feast, which, even in that all-supplying place, you would fail to meet with, and which I know would have extremely delighted you :—viz. the report of the cannon through the deep woods around us, with the shrieks and cries of parrots, monkeys, and the other wild inhabitants on hearing it : and, above all, the enchanting echo which was returned to us across the river. Never did



found more delight the ear ! I had listened each night, with rapture, to the solemn reverberations of the evening gun, and was quite prepared to watch the effect of a more heavy firing. It was sublime, and wanted only the stillness of evening, and the timid rays of the moon to render it celestial. Issuing from the cannon, it hung in murmurs among the woods ; and being softened by the water, echoed in notes which thrilled the frame with sensations of delight ; indeed so grand was the effect, that one might almost pardon the enthusiast who should sigh for an action by moonlight, in order to enjoy the soul-transferring echo of these wild and endless forests. On escaping from the fort, the sound seems first to cross a part of the water, and rolls softly through the island of trees, at the river's mouth : from thence it traverses the remainder of the wide stream, and on reaching the thick woods of the opposite shore, it suddenly echoes, as if abruptly repulsed into the water. Afterwards it breaks through the forests, and is heard in rumbling undulation, as if interrupted in its course, till at length its awful reverberations steal their hollow way through the distant woods in heavy-rolling thunder.

## LETTER XXII.

*News reaches Berbische of the capture of the island of St. Lucie. A sentinel on guard destroyed by the "Coup de Soleil." Marked case of yellow fever in a grenadier, named Llewellyn. The Savanna near fort William Frederic inhabited by alligators. A sentinel, frightened by the approach of one of those amphibia in the night, fires and alarms the garrison. The alligator an animal of great strength and hideous form : Is strongly protected against external injury : is peculiarly susceptible of life ; His flesh used by the negroes as food. Visit of a party to the governor's and Mr. Blair's fete given to the slaves at the government-house. Author's reflections on the scene. The dance interrupted by a party of the sons of Bacchus. Humorous remarks of the governor indicative of his correct knowledge of the English language. Politeness of the governor and Madame Van Battenburg, to the officers. Sumptuous entertainment at Mr. Blair's. Author visits the "Yaw-house." Wretched appearance of the objects afflicted with this hideous malady. A distant excursion projected, in which the Author hopes to join.*

Berbische, June.

ON the 10th inst. a sloop arrived from Demarara bringing us news of the surrender of St. Lucie : but stating only the simple fact, unconfirmed by any authentic details. Still we cheerfully hail the tidings, not doubting

but the conquest has been honorable to our countrymen and comrades.

Since I wrote to you last we have had the misfortune to lose one of the soldiers by the disease called *coup de soleil*, or *ictus solis*. The poor man was on guard and stationed as sentinel to take his turn of duty for two hours at the gate of the fort, but before this short period had elapsed he was suddenly seized, fell down, and expired at his post. The day was excessively hot, and the perpendicular rays of the sun fell in their fullest ardor upon his head. Others of the men have likewise experienced the disease, but we have only, in this instance, seen it fatal.

I may also mention to you a very marked and melancholy case of yellow fever which has occurred at fort William Frederic, affording a striking example of the nature of this afflictive malady. A grenadier named Llewellyn, a handsome and well made man, of robust figure, was brought into the hospital, complaining only of an uneasy sensation about the region of the stomach, which although indescribable, conveyed to him an early assur-



ance of the fatal tendency of the disease, with which he was attacked. On asking him to explain his complaints, and the feelings which so alarmed him, he replied—“ *I feel that I shall die.*” and placing his hand over his stomach, said he had “ something there” that would soon kill him. We used all the means in our power to divert him from this desponding impression—but in vain ! nothing he said could restore him, for he felt the hand of death upon him. He evidently laboured under an attack of the disorder, termed yellow fever ; but, with the exception of this fatal sensation, no symptom was present which could have led to the apprehension of immediate danger. At my next visit on the following morning, I found him sitting up, and apparently somewhat relieved ; but on my asking him how he was, he still replied—“ *Dying ! I feel that I shall soon be gone.*” —He continued perfectly rational and collected until the next day ; when, alas ! death but too surely confirmed the accuracy of his predictions. From the moment of attack he had felt assured, that nothing could save him ! The indescribable feeling he complained of, seemed to induce a rapid exhaustion of the vital powers, while it formed, not only

the leading feature—but almost the only symptom of the disease.

Upon examination, we found the same redness of the inner coat of the stomach, which we had observed in all cases of yellow fever, and in the lungs were some strong marks of recent inflammation.

I mentioned in a former letter that alligators were in the list of our neighbours at Fort William Frederic. They abound in the adjoining savanna, and in their journey down a small muddy stream to the river, they often visit the fosse surrounding the fort; and sometimes are even bold enough to ascend the works, and peep like spies from the ramparts. One of them lately alarmed a sentinel in the night, by suddenly approaching him as he was standing at his post within the fort. The soldier, terrified at so unexpected a visitor, in the impulse of surprise fired upon the animal, and spread an alarm throughout the garrison. The guard instantly turned out, and all the troops were roused, and flying to arms, in the idea that the enemy was about to land—But lo! the frightened crocodile retreated,

and the soldiers, instead of fighting, had only to return to their beds !

We have since had one of these frightful amphibia killed, and I may venture to say, that a more hideous specimen of the animal creation, can scarcely be met with. It appeared the most forbidding of nature's forms. The green eyes, the sharp teeth and monstrous jaws, the strong waving tail, the hard impenetrable skin, and the short thick legs, and formidable claws, together with the circumstance of its crawling so near the earth, render the alligator a real object of horror. He is strongly armed both for attack and defence: while his scaly horn-like skin, serves as a protecting coat of mail, he possesses, as an assailant, the devouring grasp of his shark-like teeth, and the power of striking a blow with his strong shell-like tail, which might knock a man down, or fracture his legs.—His short limbs are also of peculiar strength, and are each armed with four powerful claws.

With all this strength of form, and of action, he is an animal singularly tenacious of life: indeed, by the common means of destruction



it is impossible at once to deprive him of animation ; for however cut, beaten or torn, still signs of vitality remain for a considerable time. It is only with extreme difficulty that he is conquered in the first instance, and—even when subdued—to kill him is still a task. Unless at certain parts, a musquet ball will not penetrate his skin, and a strong blow scarcely does him any injury. If cut, or torn in pieces, and left to appearance dead, he, for a long time after, exhibits marks of vitality upon being touched.

The one we destroyed was first shot in the head, but he was still a most dangerous and active enemy, and had nearly seized one of the negroes by the leg. Notwithstanding his being shot, he remained unsubdued until he had received many severe blows behind the neck ; and for long after this he struck very powerfully with his tail. Further attempts were made to kill him, but, as late as two hours from the time he was conquered, he pressed my hand with considerable force, on taking hold of his claw ; for several hours longer, he continued to shew signs of life, and it was even difficult to mark the moment when it became ex-

ting. I had intended that you should some day have seen his formidable coat of armour, and for that purpose, I had given directions to have it carefully preserved; but from waiting to know that the poor animal was actually dead, before we stripped him of his skin, we unluckily lost him, and I shall only be able to shew you his claws. Having left him near the hospital while we walked into the fort, the negroes took an opportunity of stealing him away; and on returning we found our alligator chopped in pieces, and stewing into soup—the slaves anticipating the mess, as a delicious feast. The meat was white, and not unlike the flesh of a rabbit, and were it not for the common prejudice attaching to its form, perhaps, as food, the alligator might not be found inferior to other amphibious animals. Possibly it might be equal to our high-flavored turtle, or the more delicate frogs of France.

We have lately made a party from the fort, and spent two most pleasant days—one at the governor's—the other with Mr. Blair, a rich planter, residing at a short distance down the coast on the opposite shore of the river.

At the governor's a dance and fête were given in the evening to the slaves, and we were extremely delighted to see with how much of real happiness they enjoyed themselves. They assembled in the great hall of the government-house, having a violin, with the fife and drum for their band. Both negroes and mulattoes danced with an animation and vivacity which bespoke them free from care. The governor, his lady, his sister, several gentlemen of the colony, and our party from the fort attended as spectators, and were all amused and gratified in witnessing this merry dance of slaves. While looking upon them at this joyous moment, I bent a thought to Europe, and wished that the tattered and indigent sons of liberty could feel as happy.

Madame Van Battenburg, who is studious to promote the comfort of her sable throng, cordially participated in their mirth, and by her cheerfulness and vivacity added new wings to the festive hours. Reflecting that the peasants who toil in freedom for their daily bread, have not within their reach such complete and cheerful relaxation as was procured to these contented slaves, I became fixed in contem-



plation of the scene before me, until the comforts and advantages had nearly concealed from my mind the bitter ills of slavery. But busy recollection brought to my remembrance that every slave had not Governor Van Battenburg for a master, nor Madame Van Battenburg, for . . . . . a friend ! for such she truly is to those who serve her in bondage.

Until now I had only seen the slaves perform the rude African dance upon the open green, and had not imagined them capable of moving with such order as they here exhibited in regular country dances.—Even minuets, to our surprize, were led down, in precise and stately step, and with a degree of ease and gracefulness of movement which is seldom witnessed among the common people of England. Mirth and gaiety sparkled in every eye, and animated every countenance. It was pleasure unalloyed, and, yielding to the glowing impulse of nature, each gladdened soul drank in full draughts at the purest fountain of enjoyment. They were indeed happy—happy slaves !

In the course of the evening a circum-

stance occurred which had nearly interrupted the order and harmony of the fête ; but it terminated with only affording to the governor a pleasant and facetious opportunity of convincing us of his intimate knowledge of the English language. In the midst of the dance three officers of our army and navy, who were not of the party invited, and who had been devoting rather too freely to the rosy god, came reeling, abruptly, into the hall. One of them, with the busy officiousness of inebriety, insisted upon introducing the others to Madame Van Battenburg : but he had forgotten his English !—or, in the confidence inspired by wine, was ambitious to display his knowledge of French ; and therefore addressed her only in the latter language, speaking it so incorrectly that it was difficult to comprehend what he said, or rather what he meant to say. Alarmed at his reeling and stammering, Madame Van Battenburg begged to be protected lest he should tumble against her ; and true enough, at this moment, the poor captain fell sprawling at her feet, and narrowly escaped beating her down. After much exertion, and with some assistance, he again rose up, and supported himself upon his legs. He had now to

make his apologies, which were likewise attempted in broken French—too bad to be understood. During all this his companions were reeling about the hall, but, regardless of them, he continued to persecute Madame Van Battenburg with his bad French, and even insisted upon either her or Mademoiselle Van Battenburg joining with him in the dance, “*Venez, venez, Madame,*” said he—“*il faut danser—voulez vous viens danser avec moi ?*” but finding he could not prevail with either of the ladies, he suddenly turned from them, and happening to stumble again upon his companions, each of them seized a fable damsel, and dragging their three ebon partners into the row, took their places in the dance. But it soon appeared that they could perform only *reels*, and the country dances of the blacks being interrupted by their presence, it became necessary to lead away these *slaves . . . . of the bottle*, in order to prevent both the spectators, and the dancers from being deprived of their amusement; and accordingly, with some trouble they were led back to the barrack. Madame Van Battenburg feeling surprised at our intoxicated captain speaking to her only in bad French, mentioned it as remarkable, that he did not utter one syllable of



English : when the governor, on hearing the observation, replied, no ! my dear, it is not at all strange that Captain —— should not speak English to-night ! on the contrary it is highly proper and correct : you know he is a British officer ! True ! said Madame Van Battenburg, and that is the very reason why he should speak English ! No, no, no ! my dear, resumed the governor, that is expressly the reason why he should not—“ It would be disloyal in a British officer *to clip the King's English.*” On another occasion this agreeable Dutchman gave a similar proof of his close acquaintance with our language. One day as they were sitting over the bottle, he and an officer of the navy debated respecting some property, which the governor considered as private, and the officer as public. The former urged that it was sacred, and might not be confiscated ; while the latter insisted that it was colonial, and ought to be condemned for the benefit of the captors. Each maintained his opinion with amicable warmth—neither yielding to the other. In the evening a ball was given to the party at the governor's house ; and in the mirthful dance, the officer, perhaps a little elevated by the debate, or the bottle,

took Madame Van Battenburg in his arms and saluted her. The governor observing it, instantly called out with emphasis—"Very well captain! Do you not consider that *private property* either?" Perhaps few foreigners, who have not resided a long time in England, have acquired a more just idea of the spirit of our language. The governor is a pleasant well-informed man, and a social companion. His address is genteel; his manners cultivated. He is hospitable and friendly: his mind is highly liberal, and in his conduct he obtains general respect and esteem. His door is always open to his friends: the officers are frequently invited to his table, and he kindly allows them to consider his house as a home.

Madame Van Battenburgh is cheerful and entertaining. Her disposition is lively and animated; she sings very sweetly, and in conversation is sprightly and affable. She generously emulates the governor in his friendly hospitality, and, together, they make their abode pleasant and familiar to us all.

There being no coffee-house nor tavern at New Amsterdam, and the government-

house being most conveniently situated at the landing place on the bank of the river, we are happy to avail ourselves of the liberal offer of the governor, and to make his mansion our resting place, and point of rendezvous, in our occasional visits to the town.

To speak of the sumptuous day we had at Mr. Blair's were to throw an air of doubt upon my former notes regarding the paucity of fresh provisions in these colonies. But let it be remembered that individuals of large estate may find the means of procuring a most ample supply, for their own table, although the colony may not furnish an overplus to send to the public market: and, indeed, at Berbische fresh animal food is provided for the troops more frequently than we have yet been able to procure it at Demarara.

Mr. Blair, is one of the most opulent planters in these colonies, and, not disliking the good things of life himself, he has assembled them at his place of residence in sufficient supply to enable him to treat his friends with the most sumptuous liberality. He is



generous and social, and the riches of his table are dispensed with all the bounty of his nature. Instead of a plain cottage just rising from the wild woods of an infant settlement, we might have fancied ourselves feasting in one of the hospitable mansions of old England, nay, in some chartered hall, even, of voluptuous London itself.

The house is a compact dwelling, neatly built of plain wood, offering in its exterior nothing to attract the stranger's eye, nor to bespeak the many luxuries within. It stands on the border of the sea, open to the wide ocean. Before it, is an extensive and flat beach of firm sand, forming a pleasant ride or walk at the side of the water. The estate is quite in its infancy, being recently formed out of the rude forest, and indeed only now breaking into cultivation. In great part of it the young plants of cotton are just shooting from the soil between the remaining stumps of trees lately destroyed. Yet notwithstanding the infant state of this hospitable home, it offers more of the good things of life, than I had seen at any other place since leaving England. Having no market in the colony, each planter's abode

must necessarily furnish all within itself. No aid can be had from the butcher's, or the baker's, none from the green-grocer's, or poulterer's,—the pastry-cook's, or confectioner's. No such persons are here known, and hence the whole of the entertainment must be the immediate production of the estate: every necessary, every comfort, and every luxury that is given, or enjoyed, must be found in the house or upon the plantation, yet in such plenty were they served at this prolific home, that one might have fancied a Covent-garden, or a Leaden-hall market to have been near. From all we had previously seen in the colonies, it had been wild to have conjectured that so complete a collection could have been assembled.

A large and very handsome boat was sent for our conveyance, having an awning at the stern to protect us from the sun; and we were rowed across the mouth of the river by eight of the finest slaves of the estate, who pulled us on with surprising speed. At the landing place another party of slaves were in attendance with horses in readiness to conduct us to the house. The sun was extremely powerful, but we had a pleasant ride about a

mile and a half through fields of cotton and of plantains; the negroes running at the horses sides, according to the custom of the country, as fast as we chose to ride.

Hock and Seltzer water were presented immediately on our arrival, and the time until dinner was most gratefully occupied in the perusal of a packet of newspapers, just arrived from England: than which perhaps a greater treat could not have been offered us. For dinner we had excellent soup, with boiled fish, stewed fish, and fish in pie—also turtle, and crabs, most exquisitely dressed, and forming two uncommonly rich and high-seasoned dishes. We had likewise a side of lamb, a fine goose, a large well-flavored ham, and a variety of other good things. Pies, tarts, and a well compounded *trifle* followed, amidst a complete course of sweets. The cook was quite a proficient, and did every justice to the feast, the whole dinner being well dressed, and as well served. We had afterwards pines, shaddocks, melons, water-lemons, and multitudes of other fruits. Nor were the fluids of the banquet less amply administered. Hock, Claret, Madeira, and Port wines were in liberal



use. We had also Seltzer and Spa waters, likewise bottled small beer, ale, and porter, with brandy, rum, Hollands, noyeau, and other liqueurs—all in supply sufficient for a lord, mayor's feast.

After our good eating and drinking we took a walk about the plantation, and found every corner of it equally plenteous as the table and the cellar. Such a store of living stock, both large and small, I had not seen upon any estate since my arrival in the Western world. Here were large herds of cows, oxen, sheep, and goats; droves of hogs, horses, and mules; flocks of geese, turkies, ducks, Guinea fowls, and chickens. A more gratifying assemblage of domestic plenty could scarcely be found in any country. Among the stock I should not omit to mention a pen of living turtles kept in readiness for the table:—whole droves of crabs were also running about near the door;—and the neighbouring sea is, at all times made tributary to the board. Several hundreds of negroes employed at work, or moving from place to place, improved the variety of the scene; while they added essentially to the value of the home—for, like the

cattle, these are always included in calculating the stock of the estate. Together with the multitude of domestic productions at this all-supplying abode were likewise some of the more rare and curious specimens—such as the small lion,—monkey—and the large powys, or wild turkey of the woods; also the trumpeter, the fly-catcher, and several other uncommon birds. Our walk was highly gratifying, and offered much to excite, as well as to interest our contemplations. We extended it to the sea beach, and found the sand flat and firm as a bowling-green, and of a dark brown colour, whence it was neither liable to be blown into the eyes, nor to offend them by its brightness. A cool and constant sea-breeze adds to the many advantages of this situation: it is always free and pure, there being nothing to impede or contaminate it between the house and the ocean. After it grew dark a rubber was proposed as the amusement of the evening—but cards had no power to attract the majority of us from the *dear* unfinished Times and Chronicle. We slept in hammocks according to the common mode of the country, and a most excellent and convenient mode it is, for a very large party may be thus accommodated

in a small house, it being only necessary to hang up as many hammocks as there are persons. Neither beds, sheets, nor blankets are required, for the hammock includes them all, and serves as bedstead, mattress, and coverlet into the bargain.

The next morning I rose at an early hour, and made a walk before breakfast, to visit what is here termed the “ yaw-house ;” a kind of hospital placed at a distance from all the other buildings, for the accommodation of such of the negroes as may be afflicted with that hideous and distressing malady—the yaws. Here I saw some of the most striking pictures of human misery that ever met my eye—sad objects of compassion, and disgust ! Not to commiserate their sufferings were impossible, but their offensive and wretched appearance creates a sense of horror on beholding them. Of all the unsightly diseases which the human body is heir to, this is perhaps the worst. Imagine to yourself a group of meager sickly-looking negroes, with their bones almost piercing their unhealthy obfuscate skins, and their bodies beset with ragged noxious sores, and ulcerous excrescences, and you will have some idea



of the miserable inhabitants of . . . . . a yaw house. Congregated disease, crowded suffering, and accumulated wretchedness are spectacles common to the eyes of medical men ; and I may add that they have been long familiar to mine ! Yet the effect of this scene was too impressivve ever to be effaced from the eye of my mind. Some of these diseased and truly pitiable objects were crouching upon their haunches round a smoky fire, some stood trembling on their sadly ulcerated limbs, others, supporting themselves by a large stick, were dragging their wretched bodies from place to place ; while many, too feeble to rise, lay shivering with pain and torture upon the bare boards of a wooden platform.

Unhappily for our species, this most odious distemper is contagious, and readily communicated from one person to another ; nor has it hitherto been found to be within the power of medicine. It often exists for years, and even where it sooner yields, its removal is more the effect of time and regimen than of medical treatment.

When a negro is attacked with this cruel

disorder, he is separated from his fellow-slaves, and sent to the yaw-house to remain until he recovers. Commonly it is six, and often twelve months, or even more, before he is again fit to return amidst the gang. An improved diet, with cleanliness, pure air, and sea bathing are most conducive to his recovery; whence it may be inferred that filthiness, and poverty of food, are among the occasional causes of the disease. From its resemblance to an afflicting malady, but two well known in Europe, mercury has been much employed as a remedy, but, unfortunately, with very little success.

I may here announce to you that another excursion of a more extensive nature has been projected, for the purpose of visiting the planters' estates in the remotest parts of the colony; and of proceeding up the river even beyond the farthest settlement of the colonists, in order to see the Indians in their native dwellings amidst the deep woods. The governor and several other gentlemen residing near the town have been consulted as to the facilities of such an expedition; but the opinions collected are discordant and unsatisfac-

tory—some conceiving that it might be effected without difficulty—some considering it as perilous and quixotic, and others representing it as wholly impracticable: but we find that it is extremely difficult to obtain any accurate information upon the subject, there being very few persons in the colony who have interested themselves regarding either the remote parts of the settlement, or the actual state and habits of the people whose territory they have invaded, and who have been driven from the very soil on which they are now acquiring their riches: hence, if undertaken, it must be entirely a marooning excursion, the party making a home wherever it can be found, proceeding while it can be made pleasant, and returning when it becomes disagreeable. Under all circumstances if it takes place, I shall endeavour to be one of the party—and, need I remark to you that, I shall not be the first who will propose to return. If we go—my pocket ink-case shall be my travelling companion, and in noting observance, I will think toward you from the wildest depths of the forest.



## LETTER XXIII.

*Indolence and visionary difficulties often the bane of our gratification. Author engages with a party in a marooning excursion up the river Berbische. No fixed plan, but the journey regulated by the information and treatment met with en route. Difficulties and obstacles suggested by gentlemen of the colony. Ignorance of the Dutch language the greatest impediment. Stores and necessary resources collected in the boat. Departure from New Amsterdam. Mode of completing the boat's crew a little unwarrantable. Plantation Het Pleytanker the first place of call. The party well received by Mr. Deen. Meet Mynheer Abbensets. Proceed with him to Essendam to pass the night. Friendly attention of Mynheer Wohler a Hanoverian surgeon. Author and Mynheer Wohler make a promenade round the plantations Essendam, and San Souci.*

Berbische, June 28.

**H**ow true it is, my friend, that where inclination leads, difficulties are easily subdued! After the many apprehensions expressed, and the various interruptions and difficulties enumerated, we have performed our contemplated expedition, without encountering a single impediment which was not readily overcome. This confirms to me the opinion that most of the obstacles opposed to our minor pursuits,

and even of the mighty obstructions placed in the more important path of life exist only in imagination. In far the majority of instances discretion and prudent perseverance might surmount them, but where exertion is required, we are too indolent to remove the opposing forms which fancy has created. Terrified, or too implicitly yielding to visionary impossibilities, torpid inaction examines not whether they are phantoms or realities, and we forego the advantages of the pursuit, from a disinclination to use the efforts that may be required in its execution.

In the present instance, had we listened to the timid counsel of those whom fancied difficulties had deterred from engaging in it themselves, we had neglected making an excursion which has afforded us infinite gratification.

But, to our subject. Soon after our visit at Mr. Blair's, our party was formed, and we set off *en quartette*, Captain de Courcy, Captain Webb, Lieutenant Mackie, and myself, on our fondly anticipated journey. We had a four-oared boat from the fort, with an awning built over the part where we sat, which not only

protected us from the sun, but also, by means of a door and windows, enclosed us as it were in a cabin. Sufficient intelligence could not be collected to enable us to fix either the limits of our excursion, or the period of our return. We had, therefore, no settled route, and our movements were to be forward or retrograde, as we found that pleasure or discomfort attended our path. It was completely a *marooning* or rambling adventure. Placed at the disposal of the blind goddess, we reserved to ourselves only the power of retreating, in case she should use us unkindly. Where to find food, or where take rest depended entirely upon chance. Every planter, and every estate were alike unknown to us : but we knew that there were plantations, and places of abode, upon the borders of the river : we knew, also, that in all civilized countries, where strangers are but seldom seen, hospitality is a prevailing characteristic of the inhabitants ; we, therefore, became intruders upon the good-will of the colonists, resolving to seek a home wheresoever our convenience should point, and to regulate our journey by the information we should acquire, and the treatment we might experience. If the excursion should turn out



pleasant and interesting, we might pursue it to the extent of nearly two hundred miles up the river. If on the other hand we should find it perplexing and inconvenient we were to return after the first or second day—thus governing ourselves wholly by events.

Among the obstacles said to present themselves, was that of it being a bad period of the year; and it was suggested that from the heavy rains of the wet season, the river would be swelled, and the current so rapid, that the negroes would not be able to row against the stream. Upon this account it was contended that we could journey only a very short distance each day, and not even that without great labour and fatigue to the slaves. Had we not received other more happy reports, this would have deterred us from the undertaking. It certainly was a circumstance that merited consideration, and we found in it an additional reason for avoiding every thing like a settled plan. The opportunity must always present itself of learning at one estate how far distant we were from others, and we should then have the power of judging by the tide, and by the labour required, at which to pause:

and, at worst, should night chance to overtake us, when no plantation was nigh, we should always have the remedy of tying the boat to a tree or a bush at the side of the river, and letting the negroes rest until morning.

The only real difficulty that seemed to present itself was our ignorance of the Dutch language. It happened that I was the only one of the party who had any knowledge of it, and there was much cause to doubt, whether I might be sufficiently conversant with it to make myself understood. However, by a little Dutch, a little French, and a little English we trusted we might make our way. It being probable that we should be many days on our excursion, we established a certain routine of duty, such as directing the slaves, presenting the party to strangers, making the necessary arrangements, &c.; and agreed that each should take it by turn to be "orderly" for the day, thus forming a sort of military *fatigue duty*, which was to fall upon each in rotation, according to a settled muster.

To provide for ourselves the comforts, or even the necessaries of the journey, was not in

our power. Our whole list of stores consisted of a cold ham and some bread, with a supply of plantains for the negroes, some wine and Hollands, a few bottles of water, and our hammocks.

The sides of the river being, for the most part, very flat and low, and entirely covered with thick woods, we were sensible that the views could not be sufficiently varied at all times to amuse the eye and the mind, or to prevent the fatigue which must necessarily arise from sitting many hours each day in the boat; we therefore took with us some books and a pack of cards, as occasional resources to divert us from the continued sameness of the scene.

Thus equipped, we embarked on the morning of Wednesday June 15, from the town of New Amsterdam. Unfortunately on proceeding to the boat, we found only four negroes on board, and without a fifth, to act as timoneer, we must either have suffered the inconvenience of losing the use of an oar by putting one of the four slaves to the helm, or we must have been subjected to the annoy-



ance of being always exposed to the rain or the sun, by taking the steering duty ourselves. In this dilemma, I blush to say that a remedy was found in the expedient of half-seducing, and half-pressing into our service a negro who was standing in idleness at the landing place. Our crew being thus completed, we ordered the most intelligent of the fort negroes to assume the post of cockswain, and putting the others to the oars, took our departure without having decided where to make even our first place of call. Rich estates, commodious houses, and hospitable planters, were not deficient about this part of the river; and as we had adopted the principle of seeking a home, wheresoever we should find it most convenient, we resigned ourselves without hesitation to the discretion of the slaves, desiring them to make a port whenever they might feel themselves fatigued, or should find the tide impede their progress. It happened that they took us on shore, about two o'clock, at a plantation called "Het Pleytanker." We advanced to the house *sans ceremonie*, and introduced ourselves by observing that we were engaged in an excursion up the river, and had put in for the purpose of resting the slaves; and of learning

where we might conveniently take up our quarters for the night. We were received with great hospitality by M. Deen, the manager, who insisted upon our taking dinner before we proceeded further. At table we met a Dutch gentleman, named Abbenfets, who, on learning the nature of our expedition, very cordially invited us to accompany him to the plantation "Effendam," where he was pleased to say he should be happy to accommodate us not only for the night, but for the morrow, and as long as we could make it convenient to give him our company. We hailed this as a fortunate rencontre, not merely on account of being provided with a home for the first night, but as it augured favorably respecting the hospitality we might require at the various plantations in the course of our journey.—We partook of a very good dinner at Het Pley-tanker, and, soon afterwards, availing ourselves of the tide, accompanied M. Abbenfets to Effendam, which we found to be one of the richest coffee plantations of the colony. The house bespeaks the value of the estate, being a spacious building, and superior to any we had seen in Berbische, except the governor's mansion. Nothing could exceed the kind liberality

of M. Abbenfets. He entertained us with all the cordiality of a friend, and we lamented that from speaking a different language, we were deprived of the full enjoyment of his society. M. Abbenfets knew only his native tongue, therefore, in conversing with him, we were obliged to speak in French through the medium of a Mynheer Wohler, a Hanoverian surgeon, to whom we were presented on our arrival at Effendam, and who, very obligingly, undertook the office of interpreter to both parties. On account of my being a medical man, and having some little knowledge of the Dutch language, M. Wohler addressed himself mostly to me in conversation : and, as a professional brother, I was likewise honored with further attentions, and invited to accompany him in a ride round the estate ; for which purpose he ordered a very excellent horse to be saddled and brought to the door ; accordingly, leaving the other gentlemen to converse by signs with M. Abbenfets, we made the tour, not only of Effendam, but also of *Sans Souci*, the adjoining plantation under the management of M. J. Abbenfets, nephew of Mynheer Abbenfets of Effendam. Green paths, bordered with luxuriant fruit trees, traverse these estates at various parts,



and, together with forming pleasant rides, give a general air of neatness, and add to the richness conveyed by the fertile coffee bushes which spread the fields.

On our arrival at Essendam we were served with tea and coffee, and at nine o'clock was set before us a handsome supper of soup, fowls, omlet, and many other good things. Madeira and claret were amply supplied, also Hollands, bottled small beer and porter. At eleven we went to our hammocks, congratulating each other on the success of our first day's adventure.

Our intrusions were not barely permitted, but we were received and treated with the most unaffected hospitality, and in the kind attentions of those we visited we could discover that genuine welcome, which seeks to make the stranger feel that in giving his company an obligation is conferred—not received.

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*Author and his comrades leave Effendam. Generous and friendly hospitality of Mynheer Abbenfets. The party obtain much useful information from Mynheer Schneider respecting their journey. Mynheer Abbenfets and Mynheer Schneider contribute additional supplies to the boat. A long journey to the estate Vigilantie. Heavy toil for the slaves. They stop occasionally and plunge into the river to refresh themselves. A friendly welcome by Mynheer Malsted. Author visits the negro yard at Vigilantie. Is presented by a negro to his sister. An example of the effect of slavery. A singular mode of punishment. The party leave Vigilantie — arrive at the old town of Amsterdam. Visit Mynheer — le vieux Fiscal, and Mynheer Scholten. Le vieux Fiscal converses in Latin — professes great esteem for the English — is violently inimical to the Stadtholder.*

Berbische.

WE left Effendam early the following morning, but not without receiving many new proofs of the friendly hospitality of Mynheer Abbenfets, who kindly entreated us to lengthen our present visit, and invited us to make his house our home, and remain longer with him on our return. In all the generosity of his character he ordered some bottles of wine, and a store

of provisions to be put into the boat for our use, en route ; and, likewise, supplied the negroes with an additional stock of Hollands and of plantains. It was between eight and nine o'clock when we left this generous stranger. According to the Dutch custom, coffee had been served to us as soon as we rose from our hammocks, but we reserved ourselves for a more solid breakfast at our next place of call.

This was at one of the sugar plantations of Mr. Blair, on the borders of the river, nearly opposite to Effendam. Here again warm greetings met us at the landing place. M. Schneider, who has the management of the estate, received us with a most friendly welcome; and a breakfast of fowls, eggs, and other solids was, presently, set before us. We found M. Schneider a very intelligent man, and acquired more information from him respecting our journey than from any person we had seen. He had already made the excursion we were engaged in, and to a far greater extent than we could possibly have it in our power to follow him, he having proceeded to the distance of eight hundred miles up the river. But he was equipped for the purpose, and attended by a



party of Indians as conductors, and a young Indian girl, who had resided among the colonists, as interpreter.

The tide serving for us to proceed, we were compelled to make our visit at M. Schneider's much shorter than we could have wished; we therefore had barely time to take our breakfast, and accompany the intelligent manager in a short walk about the plantation, in order to see the sugar works, some fine trees of the mango, and a young plantation of the bread fruit. At 10 o'clock we resumed our seats in the boat when M. Schneider kindly desired to contribute to our store some bread, and some rum. We also discovered that he had sent on board, without our knowledge, half a dozen bottles of very fine porter, of which he had observed us to partake, with great enjoyment, at our second breakfast. Instructed by M. Schneider, we were to make our next home at the estate Vigilantie, where we arrived at 7 o'clock in the evening. This was a severe day for our slaves. Indeed they were exposed to far more of labour and exertion than we should have required of them, but from their own consent to the proposal of M.

Schneider ; who, assuring us that they were fully competent to the journey, asked them if they could row to Vigilantie that evening ? They replied in the affirmative, and cheerfully executed the task, arriving in high spirits, and smiling when we asked them if they were not sadly tired. But we had not felt at ease regarding them, throughout the day's journey ; for, except the short time we remained with M. Schneider, we were in the boat from half-past eight in the morning until seven in the evening. That even negroes could support so many hours of heavy and incessant labour in such a climate was past our conjecture. The only relief they required was to rest, occasionally for a few minutes, upon their oars ; at which intervals, although extremely heated, and bathed in perspiration, they had no sooner stopped, than they plunged from the side of the boat into the river, and swam about in order to cool themselves, and drive away fatigue. Hazardous as this might seem, they did not suffer the slightest inconvenience from it, but returned to their oars with new spirit and vigour, feeling more refreshed, and more delighted with their bathing than with their food,

or even their beloved grog, which we gave them in very plentiful supply:

The borders of the river offered but little to arrest our attention or to gratify our curiosity, we therefore engaged in a rubber at whist, which we contrived to play upon a board placed, from window to window, across the enclosed part of the boat. But for this resource and our books we should have suffered more fatigue from our tedious and wearisome confinement, in the boat, than the negroes did from the heavier labour of pulling the oars.

We were received with great kindness, and entertained with much cordiality, by M. Malfet, but unluckily no person at Vigilantie understood any other than the Dutch language; our conversation was therefore very limited, being carried on only by signs and broken words. The task of interpreter fell to the lot of your friend, and you would have been highly diverted could you have seen me occupied throughout the evening in stammering forth a few words of bad Dutch to serve all purposes and explain for all parties.



Desirous to know the mode of life, and to observe the habitations of the slaves, as well as of their masters, I did not neglect to make visits to the different negro yards at our various places of call. Pursuant to this custom, soon after my arrival at Vigilantie, I took with me one of the house negroes, as conductor, and went to view the huts of the slaves. In one of them my ebon guide, with great form, begged to introduce me to a very fine negress, who he said was his sister. I dare not tell you what soft overtures were made by this young lady, on my having the honor of being presented to her. The tender belles of your London lobbies could not have ogled in graces more intelligible. To convey hints of kind accommodation, seemed indeed equally the object of brother and sister. I mention this fact only to shew to you in what light prostitution is viewed by slaves—the brother would feel honored in placing the pillow for his sister on a *Backra* man's bed !

In my walk to the negro yard I met a slave who appeared under a peculiar mode of punishment, being compelled to wear an iron-

collar with three long spikes of iron projecting from it, in sharpened points, to the distance of eight or ten inches from his person. What crime had led to this strange method of punishment I did not learn. The poor man not only suffered the annoyance of moving about, loaded with this heavy collar, but he was effectually prevented from lying down, and from approaching near to any person without the danger of injuring him with the sharp points of his iron yoke.

The house at Vigilantie was very inferior to that at Effendam, but we found in it good fare, and an honest welcome. Fowls, milk, rice, eggs and the like, were set before us for supper and we had afterwards some very fine Hollands; but as my bad Dutch gave no charms to conversation, we retired at an early hour to our hammocks.

The following day was far less fatiguing to us;—although equally busy it was broken into more varied succession. We went into the boat between three and four o'clock in the morning, in order to avail ourselves of the

early tide, so as to reach the old town of Amsterdam before breakfast.—We accordingly arrived at seven, in time to take coffee with Mynheer — le vieux fiscal, with whom we afterwards shared a more solid breakfast à la Hollandoise. Our visit was divided between *the fiscal*, and *the doctor*, (M. Scholten,) both of whom received us with great urbanity, and invited us to prolong our stay at the old town.

The fiscal is 61 years of age, and although his youthful days are past, he is still active and alert. He walked with us to M. Scholten's, and the different parts of the town, during the morning, and was very attentive and facetious, meaning to be good company—but sadly fatigued us with an incessant flow of senile garrulity. He knew but little French, and although more fluent in Latin, it was neither classical, nor always intelligible. At dinner he took his glass rather freely, as we afterwards learned was his too common custom. He now became officious and troublesome in his attentions, and at length grew unpleasant and querulous. He professed a high



esteem for the English, and his civilities to us had seemed in unison with his professions. He drank bumpers to "Geo. III. and old England," but on the health of the Stadtholder being given, as we had intended in complimentary return, the mask at once fell off, and exposed him in the full character of a modern leveller. He raved and swore, called himself a patriot, and declared that he was the *firm friend* of Holland—adding, "*I hope again to see Batavia a great nation, for England has not yet conquered all the world!*" But still, in loud raving, and with strange inconsistency, the poor old man would drown himself in bumpers to George III.!—It availed nothing telling him that His Majesty and the Stadtholder were friends: he would get drunk, and sober himself again, drinking to the king of England—but nothing, he persisted, should ever compel him to swallow a drop to the health of the prince of Orange. His nephew, who was present, was very much distressed, and, begging us to accept apologies from him, entreated that we would pardon the conduct of his uncle, which he attributed to the kingly bumpers he had taken. We could only regard his effusions as the

harmless ravings of imbecility, which but served to verify the common adage:—before dinner his sentiments were disguised: wine tore away the veil, and in deep drinking, the intemperate old man again became a child, was unguarded, and . . . . *spake the truth!*

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*Mynheer Scholten chirurgien-major to the Dutch troops, Madame Scholten witty and facetious. Author reserves a specimen of humour to relate to his friend on his return to England. Old town of Amsterdam. A party of Indians. A party of manumitted Negroes. Profession of surgeon-barber not extinct in the Dutch colonies. Two of the author's comrades shaved by a chirurgo-tonsor, who supports a Latin conversation upon medical and other subjects during "the operation." The party meet Mynheer Fenner at Mynheer Scholten's. Accompany him to the estate Johanna. On arriving are presented to Madame Scholten and five other white ladies.—Good resemblance of an European garden, appearance of a gang of slaves ginning cotton by candle light.*

*Berbische.*

**M**YNHEER SCHOLTEN, although not so advanced in life as the fiscal, has been many years in the colony, busily employed in the practice of medicine, and acting as chirurgien-major to



the troops. He has one of the best houses in the old town, and all about it wears a degree of order, bespeaking much of ease and independence. Madame Scholten appeared to be a facetious pleasant woman. We took tea with her after leaving the angry *view* fiscal. She conversed in good French, and seemed inclined to wit and humour. I have stored for you some notes upon this visit, and upon a Dutch lady's prescription for a gentleman on observing him bend his eye towards a fine mulatto girl, which may some day afford you amusement. M. Scholten is about to remove from the old town down to New Amsterdam, so that we have a prospect of seeing this family added to the society near the fort, which, in this thinly inhabited settlement, will be a great acquisition.

Old Amsterdam, as a town, has little more to recommend it, than New Amsterdam, which is only now growing into existence : and the latter, with regard to commerce, has every advantage of situation ;—while the former, although many years established, has no superiority to claim from regular streets, handsome houses, churches or other public



edifices. We were indeed conducted to one large building, but it was more commodious for its purpose, as a strong built store-house, than it was ornamental or splendid. It was erected at great expence by the Dutch government, as a general depôt of stores,—only a few years before it was determined to abandon the old town ; and by this event it is rendered, in a great degree, useless.

In our walk about the streets we met with a house inhabited only by Indians—also one possessed by a party of manumitted negro women. Curiosity led us into both—the latter appeared the cleanest and best ordered abode. In the former, the family were lying or sitting about in listless indifference heedless of passing events and occurrences. We purchased from them some bows and arrows, and other specimens of Indian workmanship. Among the group we remarked a half-naked female, whose face and form were very beautiful ; and whose fine long jet-black hair exhibited the interesting peculiarity of gently waving from the lank unyielding straightness so universally observed in the sable tresses of the natives of this coast.

On preparing our persons for dinner at the *vieu fiscal's*, we had an opportunity of remarking that the old professional association of surgeon and barber so long practised in England was not grown obsolete among the Dutch. One of our party, in the indolence of the moment, wishing to avoid the trouble of unbarbing his own chin, sent into the town for a person to shave him. Quickly appeared the hospital-surgeon, equipped with a set of surgical instruments and tonsorial apparatus. He bowed most respectfully, and not ungracefully, on entering the room, demanding in Latin, which of us it was, who required to undergo the *operation*. Struck with his address and the formidable appearance of his case of instruments, we imagined that the slave who had been sent to fetch *the barber* had committed some mistake: but, on asking the question, our hero of the brush instantly replied—“*Non, domini! Sum chirurgus-tonsor!*” then, displaying his razor and bason, assured us that he was more attached to the *operative*, than to the other branches of his profession. Without further hesitation, therefore, two brave officers submitted to be taken by the nose, and underwent *the operation*, with much



ease and pleasantness, from the dextrous hand of Mynheer the *chirurgo-tonsor*; who, during the whole process, conversed fluently in Latin, upon medical and various other subjects. His education had been liberal, and he was not devoid of information, either literary, or medical: yet, from custom, he did not seem to feel any sense of humiliation in stooping to the menial office of scraping another man's chin!—Such is the force of habit! What would our English knights of the scalpel say were they called upon, in these enlightened days, to *shave* even the most dignified of his majesty's subjects?

It was within our plan as recommended by M. Malsted, after passing the day at Old Amsterdam, to proceed with the evening tide to the estate Johanna. We therefore held it a fortunate circumstance that we met with M. Fenner, at M. Scholten's, who was from that estate, and who very kindly desired to be our conductor to his home, an offer which we most gladly accepted. We dined at three o'clock at the old fiscal's, drank tea a little after four at M. Scholten's; and by five were in the boat on our way to Johanna,—where we



arrived between six and seven. Upon entering the house we were presented to a party of six white females, Mrs. Fenner and five of her friends. Such an assemblage of backra ladies we had not met since our arrival in South America: but, unhappily, only the Dutch language was known to them, which prevented us from the full enjoyment of their society. Johanna also afforded other marks of European resemblance, which are not common in the colonies, such as an excellent garden laid out and cultivated very much à l'Anglaise; and in the fields a numerous herd of cows and oxen. In the garden we saw asparagus, artichokes, turnips, cucumbers, carrots, French beans, cabbages, and other European vegetables growing in all the health and vigour of a more temperate climate. The various tropical productions were likewise abundant. Some of the walks were bordered with the fragrant lime, others were shaded with the grateful water-lemon, or the grenadillo; and a general neatness, with an unusual freedom from weeds prevailed throughout. On inquiry we learned that this well-managed and productive garden was cultivated wholly by two industrious slaves, each having only one arm, and hence

Mr. Fenner wittily observed that the labour of one negro effected it all. This was an uncommon example of industry in slaves, for so luxuriant are the weeds and so rapid the vegetation in this climate, that it is always difficult to maintain a garden in, even, tolerable neatness of appearance: but, here, two single arms subdued the obtrusive weeds, and kept the garden in far better order than many others we had seen, upon which the time and labour of three or four robust slaves were constantly expended.

In the course of the evening we were conducted to the logis to see the slaves engaged at their employment of ginning cotton. The building was very extensive, and we were led by way of a gloomy staircase to the upper story, where the blacks were all employed in one deep room which ran through the whole length of the logis, and which from the scene suddenly breaking upon us, created strong ideas of the regions of old Pluto. The stairs opened at one end of the long building, and the eye at once looked down an immeasurable depth of glimmering darkness, through

which was obscurely seen a multitude of naked black beings ; either at rest or skipping about from place to place, without our being able to distinguish what they were doing or how employed. As we approached nearer to them, we found them to be a gang of negroes, old and young, robust and feeble, male and female, all busily and variously occupied in preparing cotton, by the aid of one faint light, suspended in the centre of what seemed an interminable darkness. Some were sitting on the floor ; some at the ginning wheels ; some were crouched upon their haunches ; others standing, and many moving about, each according to the varied employment of ginning, of beating and pulling, of fetching and carrying, or of packing the cotton. Still we saw none distinctly, not even those immediately near to us ; and the unusual noise, the various movements of the negroes, the general confusion of the scene, and the fathomless darkness of the place, so powerfully called to mind the dismal regions of queen Proserpine and her grim lord, that we could not divest ourselves of the impression : amidst some faint rays of light, impenetrable obscu-



rity, also beings black and hideous were before us, and we could not but associate reality with the picture.

At supper-time the usual hospitality of the colony was displayed, and a generous plenty crowned the board. A party of thirteen took their seats at table; where a lively festivity prevailed, and it was not until a late hour that the ladies left us and we retired to our hammocks. During the evening Mr. Fenner very obligingly planned an improved variety in our mode of travelling for the next day, by pointing out to us a new road, and providing us with all the requisite means for the journey.

*The party adopt a new mode of travelling suggested by Mynheer Fenner. A Dutch mountain. Alarm excited by the author and his comrades respecting the Bush Negroes in the woods. A West India ride across the forest and wild savannas. European scene on approaching the estate Arends. Fragrant path leading to the house. The party meet a polite reception from Mynheer Pauels : dine at Arends : proceed in the evening to Mynheer Heynemann's accompanied by Mynheer Pauels and Mynheer Fenner. Visit a Dutch military post at an angle of the river near Arends. Mynheer Heynemann's household.*

Berbische.

WE rose at seven o'clock. Coffee was brought to us on quitting our hammocks, and at nine was set before us a more substantial repast. Soon afterwards we made our congé to the ladies, and took our departure from Johanna. We crossed the river in a boat belonging to M. Fenner, the negroes having been sent on with ours early in the morning. To our surprise, on reaching the opposite bank, we had to ascend a hill, which to a Dutchman might have seemed a mountain ; and on arriving at the summit of this elevated shore we found slaves and horses, equal in

number to our party, in readiness to conduct us to Arends, the home of Mynheer Paùels. The distance was much shorter by land than by water : our negroes, therefore, were sent round with the boat, by way of the river, in order to meet us in the evening ; while we proceeded, on horseback, across the woods, and savannas. This change not only afforded us a pleasant variety in our mode of travelling, but relieved us from a tedious and uninteresting journey in the boat. The first part of our ride was across a wide plain bordered with heavy forests, and exhibiting all the rudeness of primitive nature : next we traversed the deep woods, by way of a narrow path, following each other, singly, in true Indian file : then we escaped, again, into an open and wild savanna, more varied and interesting than any uncultivated spot we had seen in the colony. As we were trotting behind each other through the still shades of the forest, we perceived that the notes of our conversation became unusually soft, and rumbled in gentle murmurs amongst the trees. Struck with this unexpected charm of our voices we were induced to sound the huntsman's call, and the halloo ! of the chace, in order to observe the sweet-



ness of the echo. But we quickly discovered that, however musical and delighting in the domestic copses of England, these were calls of danger in the deep and wild woods of Guiana! Our friendly conductor, Mr. Fenner, instantly took alarm, and begging us to desist, desired that we would trot on, and be still, lest we should bring down the Bush-negroes to our path; who, if they should find themselves able to overpower us, would certainly take off our scalps, and perhaps not leave us our heads!—Need I say that we obeyed, and rode on in silence?

The accommodations of this day's journey were quite West Indian, each had a slave running at his horse's side, or holding at his tail; and each slave was loaded either with a trunk of clothes upon his head, or a bottle of Madeira wine, of rum, or of water in his hand. Imagine to yourself the picture of a party of *Europeans* riding through the wild woods and savannas of *South America*, with a body of *African* slaves running at their sides, carrying bottles in their hands, and trunks on their heads, and you will have a correct idea of our travelling group. The negroes kept

pace with us throughout the whole of the journey, and were not only at hand to give us drink on the road, but were likewise in readiness to supply us with dry clothes on our arrival.

At the distance of about nine miles from Johanna, the estate Arends suddenly opened to our view, and the scene before the eye became unusually varied and European. It, in some degree, reminded us of old England—a circumstance which gave it additional interest, and led us to contemplate it with a kind of filial respect. Looking down from high land we saw, below us, a rich plantation of coffee, cotton, and cocoa, together with the house and home of M. Paùels. On descending from the rude plain to this finely cultured estate, our road was continued along a fragrant path bordered with rows of oranges and pines, which lead across the plantation up to the house.

Our reception at Arends was friendly and cordial. We found M. Paùels to be a man of liberal education, and of refined manners. The house and environs, indeed the whole

order of the home, no less than his personal address, indicated an improved and cultivated mind. Our visit at Arends was shorter than we could have wished. We took dinner with M. Paùels, and passed a few hours so pleasantly as to regret that they could not be tenfold multiplied. But, as we were anxious to reach the utmost extent of our journey, and as the afternoon tide served for us to proceed, it was deemed expedient not to delay; and the more so, as quitting Arends would not deprive us of the society of M. Paùels, that gentleman and M. Fenner having promised to accompany us throughout the next stage of our journey. Accordingly in the evening, M. Paùels, with his own boat and slaves, undertook to conduct the party to M. Heynemann's, the remotest European settlement of the colony. We embarked from Arends on a small river or creek,—which, at a short distance from M. Paùels', falls into the great river Berbische. On the point of land, at the angle formed by the two streams, is a small battery, and an old established military post, which is still kept up by a Dutch guard, or at least the semblance of it, formed of a few antiquated invalids. We called to request of them to tell the negroes



who were about to pass with our boat, that we were gone from Arends ; and to direct them to follow us to M. Heynemann's. The guard consisted of about thirty of the old Dutch soldiers : nearly the whole of whom were in a state of intoxication, and not a man at his post. You will believe that it was not a station of high importance. Indeed, on account of its distance from the coast, it seemed only calculated to overawe the negroes, and the Indians of the vicinity, or to afford a sort of provision for a few of the soldiers who had been worn out in the service. While on shore at this point of land, we saw an old Dutch gentleman, a resident at the battery, who had enjoyed seventy-six years of life, and was still humorous and sprightly as in his youth. He expressed himself delighted to see a party of British officers, and desired we might be told, that although he could not talk our language, he could eat and drink with us very heartily, if we would favor him with our company, and stay to partake of his meal.

The journey from the fort to M. Heynemann's afforded nothing of interest or variety. The scenery was a dull sameness of river and

forest: wood and water overspread by heaven's wide canopy, were all that met the eye. We were two hours and a half in the boat, and arrived at M. Heynemann's just as it was growing dark: thus completing the journey, from the sugar plantation of Mr. Blair, in three days; although we had been told at the town that we could not perform it in less than ten. Moreover we had effected it with the greatest ease, notwithstanding our having been assured, by several persons, that such a journey could not be executed, especially in the wet season, without infinite difficulty and fatigue, even if at all. We felt it singularly fortunate that M. Fenner was of our party to M. Heynemann's, the latter gentleman not speaking any language but his native Dutch, and it being from him that we expected to acquire a great fund of information; as well regarding the customs and manners of the Indians, as respecting the country and its natural productions. He had been chosen king, or captain of a band of Indians, and having resided for many years among them, was better acquainted with their habits and pursuits than any other person in the colony. To him they brought frequent presents of what they esteem-

ed rare or curious, and it had been intimated to us that he had accumulated an extensive collection of specimens in natural history—also of Indian implements and apparatus. We found a number of Indian men and women, living in the house with this king of the district. He had also a gang of negro slaves; so that the household consisted of a medley of white, copper-coloured, and black inhabitants, who were assembled in this remote corner, from three different quarters of the globe, the group being composed of Europeans, Africans, and native Americans.

The day had been spent in busy occupation, we therefore went to our hammocks very soon after supper, in order to rest and recruit ourselves for the next day's fatigues.



*Author obtains an early conversation with M. Heynemann. Examines his collection. Messrs. Heynemann, Paúels, and Fenner's plan, for the party, the remainder of the excursion. Interesting day at Mr. Heynemann's. Indians called Bucks—the women Buckeen. Common bow and arrow of the Indians. Their accuracy in using them. Fine attitude in pulling the bow. The poisoned arrow and its tube. Author and two of his comrades proceed to Savonette. One of the party suddenly afflicted with a malady which detains him at M. Heynemann's. Visit to an Indian hut at two o'clock in the morning. Indian method of sleeping. Surprise of Vandyke, an old Dutch soldier. His remark concerning the indisposition of an Indian wife. Night accommodation at Savonette. —*

Berbische.

UNWILLING to waste more of my time in sleep than was absolutely necessary, I rose at an earlier hour than my comrades, and had the opportunity of inspecting the whole of M. Heynemann's collection before breakfast; also of hearing his observations and remarks respecting the Indians, with whom he had long been in habits of intimate association. At breakfast Messrs. Fenner, Paúels, and Heynemann planned our journeying for the two or three succeeding days, informing us that we might

have an opportunity of seeing numbers of Indians in their native dwellings, in the environs of an old estate, called Savonette, about twenty miles higher up the river ; and, remarking that according to the plan of our expedition, we should be unable to proceed further with any prospect of comfort or gratification. We could not oppose even a doubt to the opinions of these gentlemen ; therefore, embracing their proposal, we agreed to pursue our journey to Savonette with the evening tide, and after visiting an Indian village, and the other curiosities of the spot, to return to M. Heynemann's.

The morning was pleasantly spent in examining the collection of Indian curiosities, and of specimens in natural history ; but more especially in hearing M. Heynemann relate his adventures among the Indians ; whom he termed Bucks and Buckeen, these being the names commonly given to them in the colonies. We were also amused by seeing M. Heynemann and one of the Indians shoot with the common bow and arrow of the woods, and blow the poisoned arrow at a mark from its tube. The accuracy of the Bucks, in

shooting with the long arrow, and in blowing the short poisoned one, was described to us as being minute to a wonder. The common arrow used in their wars, or for the purpose of killing game, is nearly six feet long, made of a peculiarly straight and fine reed, without a knot or inequality in its whole length, and armed at the point with a piece of sharpened bone, having a barb at one side. At the shaft it is furnished at each side with a piece of cut feather, in order to steady it in its flight. Sometimes a thin piece of hard wood, sharpened at the point, and barbed with many notches, is fastened to the reed, and forms the end of the arrow :—but those who have mixed with the colonists, for the most part arm the arrow with a sharp point of steel. The arrows used for striking fish are forked, having three steel points, with a barb near the end of each, the middle point being considerably longer than the others. The bow is usually two or three inches longer than the arrow, and when strung, is not, at its greatest curvature, bent more than an inch and half from the cord. Various kinds of wood are used for the bows, the most beautiful of which is called letter-wood, a name which it has obtained from its peculi-



arly marked appearance, being richly mottled, as if stained by art, and somewhat resembling the skin of a snake. The string is made of the silk-grass, and is remarkably strong. An Indian will hit a chicken with tolerable certainty, at nearly a hundred yards distance. He is very particular respecting his arrow, and examines it with great care, in order to ascertain that it be perfectly straight, before he attempts to use it. The attitude of a naked Indian in pulling his bow, is highly graceful, and exhibits the human figure to great advantage. I have sometimes observed in it so striking a display of a well-made muscular form, that I have fancied I could have felt a regret had the nakedness been concealed under which it was presented.

The arrow which they are in the habit of poisoning is made of a light hard wood. It is about ten or twelve inches long, and of the thickness of an oat straw. It is blunt at one end, and cut to a sharp point at the other, the pointed end being dipped in the poison. The manner of using it is by blowing it from a cylindrical tube, about seven feet in length. A bit of cotton is lightly put in at

one end of the tube, the arrow is dropped in at the other end, and falls to the cotton; the lips are then applied, and the arrow is forced forward by a sudden puff, or *coup* of the breath, and is thus shot to the distance of eight or ten yards with surprizing accuracy. So expert are some of the Bucks in the use of this tube, that at twelve or fourteen feet, they will almost to a certainty strike the arrow upon the edge of a penknife stuck on the back of a chair. The tube is made of a species of reed, and they are very careful in preserving it. Indeed from the difficulty of finding the reed perfectly straight, a good tube becomes highly valuable to them, and its value is further enhanced by a superstition which prevails among them regarding the cutting of the reed. It commonly grows in wet places, or wide stagnant marshes; and superstition has stationed an evil spirit to defend it, whence the Indians have the apprehension that some ill must befall him who ventures in to cut the reed. This weakness has probably originated from some of them having been injured by alligators or serpents—evil-beings which commonly inhabit such-like places.

We asked many questions respecting the poison used upon the arrows, but M. Heynemann did not seem to have possessed himself of the secret. He described it as a compound of the juices of three different plants; but he did not seem to have correctly ascertained the mode of preparing it; nor do we learn that it has ever been prepared by any European; although some travellers have described it with a degree of precision, which might seem to imply a full and correct knowledge of its composition. It is a vegetable extract, and we are informed that it is undoubtedly prepared from several plants, sometimes more, and sometimes less in number, but whether in either case, all that are used are necessary to the efficacy of the poison is a dubious question. Its fatal effects are certain and almost instantaneous, provided the minutest particle of it mixes with the blood.—You already know that a quantity of this poison has been carried to England, and that experiments made with it in London, have proved the certainty and rapidity with which it destroys animal life.

M. Heynemann gave us a plentiful dinner, and sweetened its flavour with an unaf-



fested welcome. He expressed himself much gratified that we had made so long a journey to visit him, and confirmed his professions by his friendly conduct, and his bounty in entertaining us. In the afternoon we lost our kind conductors, M. Paúels, and M. Fenner, who left us in order to return to their respective homes, but not until they had earnestly enjoined us to repeat our visits at Arends, and at Johanna, on our return. Being thus deprived of our friendly interpreters, M. Heynemann sought to remedy the evil by calling to our aid an old non-commissioned officer, who had acquired a knowledge of our language, from having been in the English service during the American war. Attended by this old soldier, we set off at six o'clock in the evening for Savonette, the late home of M. Heynemann, where he had long resided amidst whole tribes of Indians, and received honors as their captain or chief. Under his direction, many of them had been taught to labour, and although without much of industry, the plantation Savonette had been cultivated principally by the Bucks. Studious to promote our comfort, the generous Heynemann had put into our boat some food, drink, candles, and other necess-

faries for the journey. One of our party being seized with a fit of affection for a *handsome Indian specimen* which he had seen, pleaded *sickness*, and declined proceeding with us to Savonette: but the major domo happening to discover the nature of his complaint, pleaded in his turn the necessity of *attending the sick*, and remained behind likewise, *in order to administer the kind offices of hospitality*.

The effect of the tide, so far from the sea, was very inconsiderable, and scarcely sufficed to counteract the current of the river, hence this stage of our journey became a heavy labour to the slaves. The day soon closed in, and, being enveloped on each side by the impenetrable gloom of the forests, we slowly stole along the limpid surface, amidst all the solemn stillness of night. It was two o'clock in the morning when we reached the Indian plantation, (if so I may term) Savonette, having been nearly eight hours in the boat, and much of the time in the dark. This was a sadly tedious sitting, but we were in some degree relieved from the fatigue of it, by lighting a candle, and amusing ourselves, part of the time, with our cards and books.

We regretted the lateness of our arrival the less, on account of its affording us an opportunity of seeing some of the Indians as they were sleeping in their hammocks, and observing their manner of disposing themselves to rest for the night.

On quitting the boat, we ascended what, in this country, might be called a hill, and proceeded to the house formerly occupied by M. Heynemann, which is situated upon a more sound and dry soil than is common on the borders of this river. Near to the water was an Indian hut, built like the open sheds of England, the roof only being covered in, and the sides left entirely open. Desirous of witnessing their mode of sleeping in their native dwellings, we made no calculations of peril, on the score of unexpectedly disturbing these rude inhabitants of the woods in the night; but without hesitation, entered the house, and advanced with our light close up to their hammocks. In the middle of the hut was burning a small fire of wood, immediately over which were suspended three hammocks, made of the bark of a tree, and open like net-work. Two were placed abreast very near to the fire,



and the third directly above the others. In one of the lower was lying a naked Indian man : over the sides of the other were hanging several legs and arms, and two heads, which we discovered to belong to a boy and a woman, who were lying naked together in the same hammock : in the upper one was another man with his long legs hanging out, soliciting his share of influence from the fire below. But, from the sides of the hut being left open to the breeze, it was manifest that the object of the fire, was rather to protect them from insects, than to add to the heat of this almost equatorial climate. We rambled about until 3 o'clock, availing ourselves of this moment of unexpected visitation, to gratify our curiosity with all the variety in our reach. We looked into every hut we met with, and observed the above to be the common mode of taking rest for the night. It was matter of surprise to us to find how little these people of the woods were incommoded by our sudden and nocturnal appearance among them. They expressed no concern at our presence, nor evinced the slightest apprehension or curiosity regarding us. Not so with Vandyke, a hardy old Dutch soldier, whom M. Heyne-

man had stationed at Savonette, as a kind of manager, and deputy post-holder, in order to take charge of the estate, and maintain a friendly intercourse with the naked inhabitants of the woods. This man, like the Bucks themselves, was living almost in a state of nature. The natives of the forest were his only companions, and from some of his habits, it might have seemed that, in their society, he had forgotten the duties of civilization: Yet, in his general conduct, he was attentive and respectful, and appeared to possess the soft feelings of humanity. No European lived nearer to him than at M. Heynemann's, and the few who resided there he seldom saw; nothing therefore could exceed his surprize, on waking in the dead of the night, and finding a party of officers, armed, and in scarlet uniform, standing at his bedside. You will imagine that it was with difficulty he gave credit to his senses, or believed that he was actually awake. Although I carefully remarked the expression of his countenance, his incoherent replies, and all his agitated movements, you will better conceive the effect of such a visit upon his mind than it is possible for my pen to describe it. Vandyke's bed, like the couch of the Indians,

was a simple hammock ; and only differed from theirs, in being made of cotton instead of the bark of a tree. In another hammock close at his side, was lying a naked Indian woman, whom he had selected from the woods as his wife. She appeared to be ill, and we were led to ask some questions regarding the means of procuring her medical relief, when Vandyke, with an air of nonchalance, instantly replied, “ Och ! als zy ziek is, moet ik eene andere hebben,” which may be thus translated, “ when she grows sick, I turn her into the woods and take another.”

Vandyke was too much astonished at our unexpected appearance, as well as too much a soldier, to remain quietly in his hammock, while he saw a party of officers unprovided ; he therefore very quickly rose, and, conducting us to the best room he had, set before us such fare, as his scanty means enabled him to collect, and kindly bade us welcome ; then pointed out to us some hooks, whereon to suspend our hammocks for the remainder of the night. Our chamber very much resembled an old barn. The repast presented by Vandyke was Cassada bread, with Hollands



and water: but the hospitality of M. Heyne-  
mann had prevented us from being thrown up-  
on the humble fare of Savonette—compared  
to which our boat was a luxurious larder.

The convenience of hammocks was  
never greater, nor more striking than upon  
this occasion. In such an apartment beds or  
mattresses had been objects of terror to us, but  
suspended in our hammocks, we lay in com-  
fort, bidding defiance to lizards, vermin,  
thick cobwebs, dirt and all other annoyances.

*Anticipated gratification robs the author of rest. Sensations on looking out at the door of Savonette early in the morning. Visit to an Indian village in the woods. Scenery on entering the forest. Reflections on approaching the village. Vandyke ensures the party a civil reception. No ceremony observed. Author and his comrades minutely examine all around them. Bucks absent. Buckeen employed preparing cassada. Curiosity not reciprocal. The party procure specimens of animals, implements and utensils. The laba. An example of natural affection in the wild woods. A further example of the same. Food used by the Indians. Manner of preparing it. Indolence of the inhabitants of the woods. Cassada their "staff of life." Pepper-pot of crabs, and laba. The Armadillo. Structure of the Indian huts. Author expresses a hope of shewing the model of one to his friend some day in England. Temple of incantation. Superstition of the Indians respecting disease. Hot or vapour bath. Scenery round the forest village. An immense tree of the Tonquin bean. Concerning other trees in the woods of Guiana. A Kiwihi, and other specimens presented by Vandyke: Water-lemons,—by the Indians. Military honors. Echo through the deep forest. Author and his comrades return to Mynbeer Heynemann's, and to Arends.*

Berbische.

**E**AGER anticipation tracing in my mind all that we were to see, hear, and acquire at Sa-

vonette, I had scarcely closed my eyes before it was time again to open them. The period allowed to us, by the arrangements of Messrs. Heynemann, Fenner and Paúels, was very limited; fearing, therefore, to lose the smallest portion of the allotted hours, I was again up and abroad before my companions. Stepping out at the door I gazed around me, and wishing for a thousand eyes and ears, looked on every object, and listened to every sound. It was 7 o'clock.—Vandyke had risen with the sun, and now came to offer himself to our command. Our non-commissioned interpreter was also ready, and obedient to our will. As soon therefore as my comrades left their hammocks, we took our breakfasts of coffee and cassada bread; and, without further delay, set forth into the woods, in search of the Indian town;—to visit which was the great object of our journey to Savonette. We were quite a military body, having, in our party, captain, subaltern, non-commissioned officer and private: ay! you will say, and attended by the doctor too!

Entering the forest, the first thing that attracted our notice was a cluster of wild pines,



growing ten or twelve feet high. Our path was good. Although pleasantly shaded at each side, it was not so narrow as to confine us to the usual Indian file. It more resembled the open ridings which embellish the woods of England. The scene was new. Every object created a lively interest. Expectation was ardent ; and curiosity on the point of being gratified. I cannot tell you the sensations we experienced during this walk of nearly a mile. The gnomes and sylphs of ethereal regions could not have journeyed with less fatigue. All was mind. The busy soul seemed released from its sluggish clay ; and the heavy clog of body was no longer an incumbrance. We were about to contemplate what we might never behold again—a novelty peculiarly exquisite, and of more than common interest, for . . . . . it attached to our species ! All that concerns the habits and comfort of man, I always regard with high veneration. In whatever relates to our nature, I feel a glowing sympathy ; and I affectionate the whole human race in every state and station. In what we differ and in what resemble each other, are questions of more than ordinary curiosity—questions that strike upon my mind with uncommon

influence. Whatever tends to strengthen the connection between man and man ; to improve our being, and increase the general happiness of my fellow creatures, I regard with an attachment bordering upon enthusiasm. I feel that in the great scale of creation we all are men and brothers. The little varieties in the habits of some, and the different shades of colour in others, in no degree alienate the affection I bear them, as individuals of the same social race to which I belong. Situation and circumstance may have held us separate, and have led to different customs and pursuits : but in nature, we are still the same ; whether we tread the globe in one quarter or another ; whether rude or refined ; whether pampered with luxury in the towered cities of Europe ; or fed with more simple fare in the wild forests of America !

With my mind thus occupied, I was among the foremost of the train, on our way to the Indian town. Feeling anxious to avoid every possible cause of offence, we begged of Vandyke to instruct us in such rules of conduct, as it might be proper to observe towards the naked tribe ; but he did not consider any

precautions necessary : being himself familiar with these natives of the woods, he left us to our own discretion, and assured us a civil, if not a polite reception. On our arrival he at once led us into the simple structures, used for houses. No ceremony was observed : neither rapping at the door, nor ringing at the bell was required. “ Parlez au Suisse ” offered no impediment nor delay. Vandyke advanced, and the party was at once amidst the family. You will believe that our curiosity was active. Not a house, a hut, nor a hammock escaped us. The multiplied vision of all-prying Argus could not have accomplished more. Not an article of furniture, not an implement, nor utensil ; not a step of ground ; nor a movement, nor look of any inhabitant was disregarded. We hunted through every corner and place, taking up some things in our hands, eying others, and assailing Vandyke with questions concerning all. The *Bucks* were gone into the forest to cut wood, the *Buckeen* and their children being left at home. Most of the women were occupied in one step or other of the process of preparing the poisonous cassada into food. We were anxious to see them in their different employments, and, therefore, hastened from



hut to hut in the idea of coming upon them, before their occupations were interrupted by the curiosity which we thought it probable might be excited from the unexpected arrival of a party of clothed strangers among them. But on this head we need have had no anxiety. Not an individual suffered any interruption from our presence. The curiosity, by which we were actuated, was in no degree reciprocal; for scarcely did any one take the trouble even to look towards us! We passed through their huts, and around their persons, in a manner unnoticed; and they continued at work, or unemployed, precisely as we found them! Whether on their legs, whether seated or lying in their hammocks, so they remained, no observable change being induced by our visit.

Added to the gratification of our curiosity it was in part our object to collect specimens of natural production, or of Indian workmanship. We accordingly procured a varied assemblage, in which was a small and very beautiful little animal called the Lion monkey; also a Laba, whose flesh is esteemed the most delicious food of the country. In appearance this animal somewhat resembles the hare, but

its meat approaches nearer to a mixed flavour of the hare, and of very delicate pork. It is dressed without casing; the skin being considered the most favorite part of the dish. This is very thick, and in cooking becomes gelatinous, like the calves-head, or turtle. The Indians scald off the hair or fur, then cut the animal in pieces, and stew it in cassada juice, seasoning it very high with capsicum. Thus prepared, it is truly delicious, and if it could be had in London, might form a dish not unworthy the notice of a mansion-house purveyor.

Many fine bows and arrows were among the collection we procured at this forest village. In one of the huts my eye was caught by a small bow and arrow, which appeared to be extremely delicate, of exquisite workmanship, and by far the finest specimen of the kind we had met with. I immediately formed a wish to shew them to my friends in England; and, taking them into my hand, resolved to make the purchase, whatever value might be fixed upon them. But I was disappointed by an unexpected circumstance, which very much interested my feelings, and which I shall ever

remember with pleasure. Holding the bow and arrow to the naked woman of the house, I was about to offer money, my pocket handkerchief, or my neckcloth in exchange for them; when a little copper-skinned urchin, almost covered with long black hair, broke out in such piteous bewailings, that (although to have had the bow and arrow, I would have given almost any article of my apparel) I was at once diverted from every thought of possessing them. I felt that no terms could induce me to take them, if at the expence of the tears, and broken-hearted lamentations of the young archer to whom they belonged. Still I own that I was cruel enough to prolong the little rogue's cries and fears, by an experiment upon the feelings of the mother. I wished to ascertain the sentiments of an inhabitant of the rude forest upon such an occasion; and to observe what would be the conduct exhibited under the circumstances of a son's distress; I, therefore, seemingly, persevered in my attempts to prevail on the woman to let me have the bow and arrow:—but she was true to nature; and her child's happiness was the first object of her parent breast! No offer—no persuasion could tempt her to barter her son's



peace. If her dear boy's comfort was to be the price, nothing was adequate—nothing could compensate! The little distressed rogue hung about my knee—ran to his mother—held up an imploring hand—and uttered sad cries of affliction. I, for a time, resisted the impulse of my feelings—displayed to the woman my handkerchief, and my pocket-book—offered her money—tried to soothe her son, and feigned every means of persuasion: but all in vain! She remained inflexible! Her child was unhappy, and with his comfort there could be no compromise. It was enough! The experiment was made; and I was delighted to find that in the wild woods the sacred laws of nature were not subordinate to all-subduing interest.

I had no desire further to tantalize the little weeping urchin, or his affectionate mother, therefore gave him the bow and arrow, and made him happy —— compensating the affliction I had caused him by the pocket handkerchief which I had offered as the purchase of his arms. His grief instantly vanished: but he flew to his mother, and, clinging to her, did not again venture from her side,

whilst we remained in the hut. We honored the woman for her conduct, and were delighted to witness so striking an example of the natural affections, operating in all their genuine purity, unsophisticated by the sordid motives which but too often govern the more cultivated beings of what is termed civilized life.

Further examples occurred to us evincing the powerful operation of the affections among these uncivilized people. One of the women pointed out to our observation the grave of her son; a youth who had destroyed himself because the mother of a young buckeen, of whom he was enamoured, could not be prevailed upon to let him take her daughter for his wife. Thus the wily Cupid would seem to wield his bow with equal prowess amidst the simple beings of the forest, as among the more pampered swains of crowded society. The laws of nature are universal, and she is ever uniform and consistent. In her passions she knows no distinction between the rude woods and polished cities. Courtly refinement may counterfeit, clothe, and conceal—but, if fairly exposed, the most accomplished

of mankind will be found to be governed by the same natural feelings as the uncultivated savage. The son of our afflicted buckeen was young, and his attachment as pure as it was ardent and disinterested. Without the adored object of his affections life was insupportable, and he resolved not to survive the disappointment: deprived of his heart's choice, existence lost all its charms, and he yielded himself a victim to despair! These rude people honored the sentiment. In sad grief his parents deplored their loss, and the inhabitants of every hut lamented the fate of the youthful lover. An additional instance of natural affection and attachment occurred in the solemn observance paid to his remains, which as an ever dear and sacred deposit, were entombed within the chamber where his afflicted parents dwelt!

Like all other tribes who are ignorant of the comforts and conveniencies of civilization, the Indians of Guiana procure their food from the rivers, the sea, and the forests. They have no animals domesticated, nor any grain nor roots, except the cassada, brought into cultivation; and hence they depend very much



upon the fortune of the chase for subsistence. A small species of deer, called *wirrebocerra*, the laba, and the armadillo are among the animals they most esteem. Fish and crabs are also much used, particularly the latter, which they find in great abundance in the muddy margins of the rivers; especially at the parts where they open into the sea. When fortunate in the chase, they indulge their natural indolence by lying in their hammocks most of the time until their provisions are expended; and when the supply obtained by the bow and arrow is less plentiful, or when their hunt in the woods happens to prove unsuccessful, they find a resource in crabs and cassada, which may be considered their staple articles of consumption. Indeed the cassada may be called their *staff of life*, for it offers a supply when they fail in the chase, and becomes to them what plantains are to the negroes of these colonies, or potatoes to Irish peasants. It being the only vegetable they cultivate, it is usual to see it planted in a rough and irregular manner near to and about their huts. Very commonly they prepare their food in the form of pepper-pot—their favorite dishes being crabs, or laba, stewed with cassada

juice, and seasoned extremely hot with red pepper.

I can give testimony to both of these being very rich and good; perhaps in point of flavour the pepper-pot of crabs claims the preference; but either might be a feast for an epicure. In one of the huts we saw part of an armadillo, which had been broiled or roasted in its shell. It was well-flavored, and in appearance and taste not very unlike young pig. Water is their common drink, but they sometimes use a fermented liquor called *piworree*, which they make from cassada. This is intoxicating, and has some resemblance to beer.

The huts are usually constructed like that which we saw near the landing place at Savonette. I hope to be able to shew you a model of them on my return to England—having the promise of one, made by the Bucks, with furniture complete. At the village some of the huts were closed in at the ends; others were left entirely open. The roofs were neatly thatched with the leaf of the coco-nut or the mountain-cabbage. Near to the cabins that were inhabited, we observed a detached

building enclosed on all sides, forming a single room, into which light and air were only admitted at the door-way. Upon inquiry we learned that this was devoted to the use of the sick—not as an hospital, but as a temple of incantation, for the purpose of expelling disease. Their superstition attributes sickness to witchcraft, or the visitation of some evil spirit like the Obeah of the Africans—and having faith in spells, they make little decorated instruments, of tender rushes about a foot long, which the physicians, or priests called *Pyeis*, employ, together with other magical implements, as wands to drive out these demons of ill, which they term *Yowaboos*. The *Pyei* is thought to possess a peculiar influence over the *Yowahoo*—and by means of dissimulation, and superstitious forms, the sick and his friends are made to believe that he holds an intercourse with him, previous to removing the effect of his malign visitation from his patients. The building would seem better calculated for their more natural remedy, the hot or vapour bath, which they contrive by throwing water upon a large heated stone, and enveloping the sick person in the steam.



Around the village the wood had been partially cleared away, and the scenery of this interesting spot was much improved by several cows coming out of the thick part of the forest to browse about the open space. They were the produce of a herd originally brought by M. Heynemann to Savonette.

After having gratified our curiosity by a long visit, and a minute inspection of every thing worthy of notice at the Indian town, we were led, through a close and narrow path, devoid of any turning, either to the right hand, or the left, into the profoundest shades of the forest. The way was difficult, and we were compelled to follow each other in single file, throughout the whole length of our walk; which, from the closeness of the wood, the narrowness of the path, and the consequent defection of the breeze, was distressingly hot and confined. The object from which we were to expect compensation was . . . . . a tree! we had strong apprehensions that the sight of it might not be an adequate reward for so fatiguing a walk, but we had thrown ourselves upon the judgment of Vandyke, desiring him to conduct us to all that might be

gratifying to strangers, we therefore marched on, in tacit obedience, relying upon his guidance ; and our perseverance was amply recompensed by viewing the great chief of the forest—an enormous tree of the Tonquin bean, which appears in lofty and majestic trunk, extending its high-exalted foliage above the hosts of aspiring rivals that surround it. The body forms an immense perpendicular pillar rising to the height of, perhaps, 70 or 80 feet before it throws out a shoot or a bud, then spreading its wide-expanded branches in proud canopy, so elevated as to protect from the reach, and even to conceal from the eye, the nuts which contain its sweet-scented beans. Viewing this huge tree with regard to its straight and perpendicular trunk, its immense bulk, and, above all, its prodigious height, it may be considered as one of the finest specimens of vegetable production growing on the face of the globe. In beauty and grandeur it is equalled only by the stately mountain-cabbage, whose majestic trunk, and fine palmated foliage, stand unrivalled in the vegetable world.

The trees grow to a size in these forests not readily to be imagined by persons who

have seen only those of the more temperate climate of Europe. They are tall and stately, and contain a great proportion of timber, in consequence of running up to an immense height before they throw off their branches. It is often difficult, and not unfrequently impossible to reach their fruit, or foliage. The Tonquin bean tree, when growing out of the forest, seldom attains to this stateliness of form : it branches off at a shorter distance from the ground, and in its growth more resembles the English ash ; the bark is somewhat like the poplar, and the leaves like those of the pear. The one we saw had been drawn up to an unusual height, by growing in a crowd, and was indebted to health and years for its extraordinary bulk. The nuts containing the fragrant beans are abundantly plentiful in the forest, and may be picked up in bushels under the trees, at a certain season of the year. While we were gazing at this vegetable giant, Vandyke cut on its bark the initials of our names, and the date of our visit ; and this necessary ceremony having been duly performed, we trod our way back, by the narrow path, to the residence of our friendly guide, and there most gladly made a resting place. But Vandyke



was allowed no respite, for we still beset him with hosts of questions : and when he had satisfied our inquiries, and we learned that Savonette offered no further novelty, we resumed our places in the boat, and returned to the abode of the hospitable Heynemann. Vandyke presented us with a young Kiwihi, an animal which bears some resemblance to a pig, and is about the size of a large cat, having a very long tail, marked with alternate rings of black and white hair. He also gave us several specimens of Indian implements, most of which I hope some day to shew you in England. Some of the Indians followed us to the water-side, and put into our boat large baskets filled with fine water-lemons, which they had gathered from the woods.

On our quitting the shore Vandyke honored our departure with the firing of cannon. He was a soldier, and in addition to other civilities, felt a pride in shewing to officers who visited him every mark of military respect. We were the more pleased with the compliment, as it afforded us an unexpected, and most welcome opportunity of hearing the enchanting echo through the woods.

We were in time to take a late dinner with Mynheer Heynemann, and in the evening, according to the plan laid down for us, we proceeded to Arends. M. Paúels was from home, but we found the best arrangements of the family ordered for our accommodation. We were sumptuously entertained by a young gentleman, the friend of M. Paúels; and at night were conducted to very excellent bed-chambers, fitted up more in the style of European accommodation than any we had seen in the colony.

*Feelings of satisfaction evinced by Mynbeer Heynemann. His attention to the author. Connecting link between the Indians and the colonists. Policy of the Dutch government respecting the Indians. Opportunities possessed by Mynbeer Heynemann of observing the character and habits of the people of the woods:—peculiarly qualified for the appointment of post-holder:—elected a chief among the Indians. Proposal to assemble a body of them in military array. On the remarks and observations of Mynbeer Heynemann. Indian tribes in Guiana. The Charibs most warlike. Prominent features distinguishing the Indians from Europeans — from Africans. Clothing of the Indians. Kway used by the Buckeen. Conduct of a mother and daughter on presenting the apparel of a young Buckeen to the author.*

Berbische.

THE generous Heynemann appeared much gratified by the satisfaction we expressed ourselves to have experienced in our visit at Savonette, and in our acknowledgments of the civil attentions of his deputy, Vandyke. He was particularly pleased at the interest which, he was pleased to say, I seemed to take “regarding every object, and every circumstance in this remote part of the world,” and so at-



attached himself to the means of gratifying me, that I was compelled peremptorily to arrest the liberal hand with which he would have bestowed multiplied marks of his friendship—to the injury, and almost the extinction of his own collection. At first I had freely expressed my admiration of such things as were calculated to call it forth, but I soon discovered, that to admire was to tax his generosity; for if he only heard me breathe approval, or but saw, by my eye, that a specimen pleased me, it was instantly mine. He gave me samples of various gums, nuts, and woods, employed in medicine by the Indians, also crystals, bows and arrows, Indian paddles, musical instruments, instruments of war, implements of household furniture, used by the Bucks, and a variety of other curiosities: indeed, could I have persuaded myself to have taken all he offered me, I might have fitted up a small museum; but I could not reconcile the idea of trespassing upon such liberality, and therefore positively refused many specimens of which I observed that he had no duplicates, and which I felt it possible he might afterwards lament. He was equally liberal in all his attentions, and seem-

ed desirous to explain to me whatever I wished to ask. You will believe that I had less reserve in my questions, than in the acceptance of his generous offerings, and that I was happy to call forth the observations and remarks derived from his long and familiar intercourse with the Indians. At his present abode and at Savonette he had resided, during many years, in the appointment of post-holder, having constant intercourse with the Indians, and forming the connecting link between them and the colonists.

It was the policy of the Dutch government to expend a certain sum annually in the purchase of blue cloth, beads, ribbons, hatchets, and other implements, and ornaments to give to the Indians; and it was made the duty of the person placed at the most remote estate of the colony, to associate with the Indians, and to cultivate their friendship, in order to prevent acts of hostility on their part, and to secure to the colonists the peaceable possession of the territory they had appropriated. Hence, from situation and appointment, as well as from natural

disposition, abundant opportunities had offered to M. Heynemann of intermixing freely with the Indians, and observing their most retired, as well as their more exterior habits. Possessed of enterprising talents, and a certain hardihood of mind and frame, together with affable and conciliatory manners, he was peculiarly qualified for the trust which had been so long confided to him. He mixed with the Indians, assumed their habits, insinuated himself into their good opinion, and became so entirely one of themselves, that at Savonette they elected him their chief or king; and he could, at any time, assemble them in a body of several hundreds, in military array, and appear as captain at their head.

This was a novelty which he offered to exhibit to us, if we would consent to prolong our visit, or would repeat it, giving him only a few days notice of our coming. I regretted extremely that it could not be in my power to accept either of these proposals. It was a high compliment offered to us, and what I should have particularly enjoyed; but I had only a short time to remain at Berbische, and dared not look to another long absence.



M. Heynemann is a man of great zeal, activity and exertion. With considerable penetration, he possesses much of perseverance; but from the want of a liberal education his observations, though valuable, are loose and undigested—devoid of arrangement and scientific correctness; and evidently not the result of any systematic train of inquiry. Governed by chance, and with no specific object in view, his pursuits and remarks are not so conducted as to promote, essentially, the advancement of natural science; but, perhaps, a man of high literary acquirements would be less fitted for the post which M. Heynemann has so long filled with credit to himself, and advantage to the colony. I should have been much gratified could we have prolonged our visit, and with regret bade adieu to this generous chief of the naked tribes.

Although, from my short stay among them, you cannot expect an elaborate disquisition upon the subject of the Indians, you will perhaps demand a passing word on such prominent points, concerning them, as more immediately strike the eye. I may therefore tell you that the Indians who inhabit this part

of the South American coast are of four tribes or nations, the Arrouwacs, the Accawaus, the Warrous, and the Charibbees. The Charibbees or Charibs, as they are more frequently called, are the tallest men, and of the most warlike aspect. Those we have seen of the other tribes are rather short, but in general well formed;—although their figure denotes more of substance than of gracefulness. They are of a bright bay colour, their hair jet black, long, and straight. In common they are rather personable, and their features are more indicative of mildness than ferocity; for, although in some of them the lines of the Tartar face may be traced, the character more generally denoted by the countenance is that of gentleness and tranquillity. The eyes are very black, they are small, distant from each other, and deep in the orbits. The cheek-bones stand a little wide, but they are not strongly prominent, the forehead tends to squareness of form, and the eye-brows are heavy. The nose, though not strongly aquiline, when viewed in profile somewhat approaches that shape;—the mouth is of middle size; the lips of moderate thickness; the teeth rather small, white and regular; the chin round; the angles of the lower

jaw somewhat wide : from all which you will perceive that the face is rather broad than round, although the contour approaches more to the circular than the long or oval. We did not observe among them any resemblance of the flat nose, the wide mouth, thick lips, or large teeth of the negroes.

Their necks are thick, and in general not sufficiently long to be graceful. The chest is high and full ; the shoulders square, going off at nearly right angles from the neck. The limbs are fleshy and robust. Upon the whole, they may be said to be of the figure generally denominated square-made, and consequently their form denotes more of strength, than of gracefulness or agility. Still there is a difference between their figure and that of the strong-marked muscular subjects of colder and more mountainous regions. Among the Indians of Guiana, the rough lines denoting strength are concealed in consequence of the interstices between the muscles being so filled with fat as to give a general smoothness to the surface ; and from the same cause, the fine action of the different muscles becomes less obvious, when they are in motion, or



under any exertion. Hence, although the figure of an Indian be square, full, and robust, still it does not convey precisely that idea of strength which attaches to the rough and muscular frames of the North; and yet is their form even *more unlike* that of the negroes.

It has happened to me to have frequent opportunities of seeing parties of Indians, and of Africans standing naked together, and I have always remarked a striking difference in their figure. The negroes have longer necks, and a finer fall of the shoulder. Their chest is not so full and open. The limbs are not so stout, but thinner, and longer in proportion to the body.—The form of the Indians appears close and compact, while that of the negroes is more loose and slender, and more indicative of the heat and languor of climate. The projecting curvature of the tibia, so common to the Africans, does not prevail among the Indians. The difference of countenance is still more remarkable than the difference of form; but, as the negro face is familiar to you, I need not enter into a more minute detail of the discordant features.

The Indians wear no clothing, except a band tied round the waist and brought between the legs to fasten before; such as I have mentioned to be in use among the negroes of these colonies. This is worn both by the men and women. Some, who have visited the colonists, have it made of blue cloth; but those who have not had the same opportunities of procuring cloth, make it of the bark of a tree. Sometimes, instead of this band, the women use a small apron about three or four inches square, which being tied round the waste, and left to hang loose before, serves by way of a fig-leaf. These aprons they call *kways*. Among those who have associated with the colonists, the kway is sometimes made of small beads of different colours, ingeniously put on threads of cotton, or of the silk-grass, so as to give the apron the appearance of being woven in a variety of figures. This is used as high dress, and is much valued. It happened that I, one day, met a young buckeen, thus ornamented, walking with her mother, and, being desirous to add a sample of the kway to my collection of specimens, I made signs to the parent, meaning to ask if she could procure me one; when, without the slightest hesitation,

she took off that which was before my eyes, and presented it to me : the young lady very modestly, but without blushes, supplying its place with the pocket handkerchief which I gave her in exchange.

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*Form and general appearance of the Indians. Custom of pulling the hair from different parts of their bodies. Remarks concerning the indolent habits of the people of the woods. Labour not a natural impulse. Indians fond of spirituous liquors. A degree of method obtains in their intoxication. Polygamy practised among them. Despotic towards their wives. The women toil at home, and bear the burden when they move abroad. The Buckeen sombre and reserved in presence of the men—are fond of drinking rum. Some observations respecting obesity—also concerning gout.*

Berbische.

FROM the inactivity of the Indians they are generally seen to be *enbonpoint*, and this, as I remarked before, gives them a certain smoothness of form, and of surface ; but their skins have not that velvet softness so common to the negroes. Their bodies are peculiarly free from hair. Possessing an idea, that it is more becoming not to have any hairs, except upon the head, they are in the habit of pulling them



out from the chin, the breast, the armpits, and other parts. The general smoothness, thus given to the surface, has led some travellers, who have been ignorant of the cause, into the error of considering this to be their natural appearance; and hence have arisen the strange opinions that they differed from Europeans, and were in this respect a peculiar race of the human species. The instrument used for pulling out the hairs is a small piece of wood partially split. Those who intermingle with the colonists often employ a bit of wire, twisted into a spiral form, like that which is used for making the elastic hatbands.

From the heat of the climate, and the facility of procuring food, the Indians of Guiana are naturally indolent. In every quarter of the globe the great incentive to industry is either necessity, interest, or ambition, Labour, simply as such, is no where a natural impulse. It is the effect of our real, or imaginary wants. Among the natives of these woods, it springs from necessity alone, and ceases with the immediate occasion which calls it forth. They have no interest in the accumulation of property; and therefore are not

led to labour in order to obtain wealth. They live under the most perfect equality, and hence are not impelled to industry by that spirit of emulation, which, in society, leads to great and unwearied exertion. Content with their simple means, they evince no desire to emulate the habits, or the occupations of the colonists : but, on the contrary, seem to regard their toils and customs with a sense of pity or contempt. I have, occasionally, seen parties of them looking on, when our soldiers have been assembled, and going through the various evolutions of their exercise : and they universally regarded them with a quiet indifference, or the only sentiment indicated by their features was a kind of contemptuous pity, which was sometimes expressed by a significant look, that seemed to say—"Aye, foolish people ! you take vast pains with these things :—but we do them much better, with infinitely less trouble."

They are very fond of drinking rum, and eagerly swallow it to intoxication. But they observe a kind of method in their drunkenness ; for when they come down to the towns in bodies of considerable numbers, it is observ-

ed that half of the party will freely devote to Bacchus, while the other half carefully refrain, in order to watch the helpless; and these, when restored by all-healing Morpheus, are observed to take *their turn* of watching, and to guard their late protectors through a similar visit to the deities of turbulence and repose. They have no pleasure in long sipping, but swallow large draughts of rum, or drink it quickly, glass after glass, till they are unable to move.

The Indians are very arbitrary and despotic towards their women. Polygamy is practised among them. Each man takes as many wives as he can conveniently maintain. They are very jealous, and commonly appoint the senior of their wives as a spy or guardian over the conduct of the others; but as a spice of intrigue has found its way even into the wild woods, means have been found to convert the old Duenna into the best channel of obtaining kind favors from the junior branches of the *harems*.

All the domestic labour is done by the females, and in their journeyings, from place to place, the women are made to toil under



the burden of whatever they may have to transport. Thus in removing from any place of abode to take up a new home, the different articles of furniture, and all the little variety of implements and utensils are loaded upon the backs of the women, who follow in silent train, bending under a heavy load, while their imperious lord marches on before unincumbered.

From the rigid government exercised over them, by the men, the women appear to be sombre and reserved. They commonly sit with their backs towards strangers, and remain in profound silence when their husbands are present. In their absence they shew less restraint, and seem more disposed to cheerfulness and vivacity. Like the men they are very fond of rum, and drink it glass after glass, as though it were only water.

I have observed that notwithstanding the great heat of climate, the Indians of South America are not of the same meager appearance as the negroes. From their habits of indolence a portion of fat is deposited under the

skin, which gives them a soft fulness of form unlike the rough-lined spareness of the negroes, or the strong-lined vigour of the inhabitants of colder regions : but we did not see, among the people of the woods, a single instance of the heavy, protruding obesity so frequent among the luxurious sons of civilized society. Figures, it is true, may be found among them as lean as hard-toiling slaves—but perhaps no Indian was ever seen palpitating under that oppressive protuberance of fat, which the *bons vivans* of Europe, and particularly the beef-eating subjects of England so frequently carry before them.

This circumstance may tend to shew that great obesity is only the effect of indolence, or good living, or of both acting together ; and that by a due observance of exercise and abstemiousness it might, in all cases, be prevented. Perhaps no West India planter ever lost the labour of a slave from his being overloaded with fat : nor did Alexander or Hannibal, after a long and severe campaign, ever see their armies thinned in consequence of their soldiers being oppressed with obesity. Indeed the

common labourers of Europe do not often find their toil interrupted by carrying about them a weighty mass of idulgence and luxury.

The same may be remarked in a great degree with respect to that distressing malady the gout. The Indian is not detained from the chase, the soldier from the march, nor the slave nor the peasant from his toil in the field, by the gnawings of this painful disorder. It is almost wholly confined to the rich and luxurious, and is at once the offspring and punishment of indolence and voluptuousness; nor would it long remain among the opprobria of medicine, were it possible to enforce the regimen prescribed by physicians:—although it must continue to prevail so long as forbearance, from habits of indulgence, shall be deemed a greater punishment than the painful tortures of the disease.

But what hath all this to do with our journey upon the Berbische river?—methinks I hear you exclaim! Not much truly—yet I would hope it is not a digression beyond the bounds of our preliminaries.



*The party are conducted from Arends to Johanna by Mynbeer Fenner. Journey across the Savanna and forest. Chase of a mule. Visit to an Indian Village. A wretched object of disease. A plantation of reeds for making arrows. Trees of wild cinnamon. The party dine at Johanna:—sleep at Helvetia. Cordially welcomed by Mynbeer Freinde. Honored with peculiar marks of attention by Mynbeer Fenner. A comfortless night. Unhappy feelings concerning an ebon nymph. Visit to Mynbeer Scholten at the old town. Apologies of M. le vieu Fiscal. His excesses attributed to “levelling bumpers.” A purchase from a handsome Indian woman. River current. Visit to the plantation Daargradt—a colonial estate—perhaps “prize property.” Alarm of an old Hollander on seeing a party of British officers. A wretched night in consequence of musquitoes.*

Berbische.

**T**O return with you to our tour, let me tell you that M. Fenner very kindly met us at Arends in the morning, with a fine mule, and a whole troop of slaves and horses to conduct us again to his home at Johanna. According to the usual custom, coffee was brought to us at 7 o'clock on leaving our hammocks, and without waiting for a more substantial breakfast, we made the round of the plantation, and walked to see some Tonquin bean trees, which were growing upon the estate; then mounted our ponies, and put ourselves on the march, attended part of the way by M. Mittel-

holster, with whom we had been guests for the night.

The party formed a motley group, consisting of Dutch planters, British officers, and naked Africans marching across an immense waste surrounded with wild woods, under a scorching and vertical sun, with M. Fenner our friendly conductor, seated upon a prancing mule, leading the way as commander at the head of the squadron. His grotesque figure and appearance would have highly diverted you ; for, worthy man, he was not barely a Hollander on horseback—but a *gros-culottes* dressed in a white coat and broad brimmed hat, capering upon a little slender mule, and in danger of falling off at every step : indeed it was evident to the whole corps, that if they should venture to move quicker than the Dutch *pas grave*, their leader would soon *fall* in the *rear* : — nor had we gone far before the prediction was verified ; and our decanted conductor took a soft seat on the *parterre* ; leaving *Mademoiselle mulet* to kick her heels in air across the wide savanna. Finding that our chief had fallen without being wounded, the whole troop was quickly engaged in a chase across the wide plain, to over-

take their captain's charger. At this moment a rapid thought winged its way to England, and I wished I could have placed a picture before you, representing your friend occupied, amidst a group of horse and foot, planters, officers, and slaves—*English, Africans, and Dutch*, scampering over a wild savanna, enclosed by the deep forests of *Guiana*, in pursuit of a *South American* mule. We fortunately surrounded the animal before she had made her way into the woods, and, after a wide gallop about the plain, she was brought back into the ranks.

It now became a question, who should mount the mule; for Mynheer Fenner, though not hurt, had grown pallid and nervous, and was in truth, so bad a horseman, that there was not the least probability of his remaining many minutes upon her back, if he should again attempt to ride her: and to leave our captain, our guide, and our host behind us, to walk to Johanna, could not be endured. In this dilemma it fell to my lot to undertake the management of the frisky mule, throughout the remainder of the journey; — and, whether her capering fit was subdued by the chase



about the savanna, or whether she preferred an English to a Dutch rider, it were of no consequence to determine: — she carried me pleasantly and quietly, and we arrived at Johanna without further accident or disaster.

On our way we were conducted to an Indian village, built at the edge of the savanna, just within the border of the forest. Very few of the people were in their houses. They were engaged in the chase in search of provisions, or had concealed themselves in the woods, upon seeing us approach. In one of the huts we found an old woman wretchedly diseased, left quite alone, and lying naked in a hammock. She seemed to be only a breathing skeleton: her countenance was deeply *Hippocratic*: eruptions and foul ulcers disfigured her body, and rendered her whole person a perfect object of horror: she was unable to move—almost to speak or to breathe, and exhibited altogether a most striking example of human misery.

In the neighbourhood of the huts we saw some of the fine reeds growing, which are used by the Indians for making their arrows. They appeared to have been planted

about the village for the convenience of furnishing a ready supply.

As we rode through the woods, some large trees were pointed out to us as being a species of wild cinnamon. The bark had somewhat the flavour of that spice, and on being broken resembled it in odour, but it was very rough and coarse.

We reached the Johanna estate three hours before the negroes, who had been sent round by way of the river with our boat, the journey by water having been above four hours longer than we had made it by land, notwithstanding our delay in the savanna.

Having gone to the extent of our expedition, and it only remaining to us to return down the river amidst the same unvaried scenery we had passed, we became anxious to reach New Amsterdam and the fort, with as little delay as possible, and, therefore, took an early dinner with M. Fenner in company with his party of Dutch ladies, and M. Paùels from Arends; and in the afternoon set off for Fort-Nassau, intending to hang our ham-

mocks at Mynheer Scholten's until the morrow. But in this we were disappointed from the failure of the tide ; consequently, finding at the dusk of evening, that we were not likely to reach the old town, we pursued our marooning system, and put into the first port we could make. This happened to be at the plantation Helvetia, where we were received with great kindness and civility by Mynheer Freinde. Coffee was presented on our arrival—soon afterwards the supper-board was plentifully spread ; and, although unexpected intruders, we found excellent accommodations for the night.

We did not enjoy the society of Mynheer Freinde so much as we could have wished, in consequence of our limited knowledge of his native language—yet, by means of the many good things he gave us, he made himself extremely well understood. The estate is large, and is the property of Mynheer Freinde jointly with three other gentlemen, one of whom resides in London—the two others at Amsterdam.

I might have remarked to you that at the Johanna plantation, we were this day indulged



with the luxury of having two young negroes, and an Indian girl, placed behind us waving lime boughs around our heads, the whole time of dinner, in order to keep us cool, and prevent us from being annoyed by insects, while we were eating ; and, in addition to this general protection, I was farther indebted to the flattering partiality of Mynheer Fenner, for the distinguished honor of having a separate slave stationed at my elbow with an Indian fan, with express orders to keep me cool, and guard me from the musquitoes.

At Helvetia we were not troubled with insects ; but in defiance of the convenience of our accommodations, some uneasy symptoms, displayed on the part of the major domo regarding an ebon nymph who had served our coffee in the afternoon, and an unhappy spirit of annoying his suspicions exhibited by one of our comrades, prevented us from sleeping, and caused us all to pass a disturbed and restless night.

We left Helvetia with the early tide, in order to breakfast at the old town ; and accordingly arrived at nine o'clock at Mynheer Scholten's. During breakfast we were visited by the old fiscal, who, looking extremely humble and

abashed, begged us to believe that he felt it highly incumbent upon him to offer multitudes of apologies, for his rude behaviour on the day we had dined at his house, adding that he had been extremely afflicted, from the moment he had been told of it ; and, in explanation, ascribing all his loud noise and political violence to the *levelling* bumpers he had taken of claret and Madeira. We likewise met, at breakfast, another of the oldest inhabitants of the colony, an uncle of Mynheer Scholten, whose aged and venerable figure commanded great respect for his person, while it impressed a favorable idea of the salubrity of the climate.

After satisfying the calls of appetite, we took a walk into the town, and in the course of our promenade had an opportunity of procuring a very beautiful lion monkey from one of the handsomest Indian women we had seen, and who, by signs and gestures, gave us to understand, that means might be devised, should it be very anxiously desired, to make the mistress the companion of the little animal, at our quarters at the fort.

Before noon we were again in the boat pursuing our journey down the river. Hav-

ing the current in our favor, we were carried rapidly on, and were enabled to make longer tides than when journeying the opposite way. In proceeding up the river, the slaves had found it necessary to avoid the centre, and to keep the boat as near as possible to the shore; but in returning, they gladly sought the middle of the channel, in order to avail themselves of the current. As the evening stole on, the return of tide overpowered the fresh water stream, and, by putting a stop to our progress, compelled us to seek quarters at an earlier hour than we wished. The plantation Daargradt being nearest, we dropped our anchor there, and, without ceremony, took up our home for the night.

Daargradt is one of the colonial estates, and is subject to a question of sequestration; it being yet in doubt whether this plantation, together with some others similarly circumstanced, may not be condemned as public property, for the benefit of the captors. The estate is extensive, and cultivated by a numerous gang of slaves, who are attached as the stock of the plantation, and consequently make a part of the property. My mind anticipates the idea which suggests itself to you upon this subject; but you will not expect that I should



offer comments upon the prospect of sharing *prize-money* from such a source.

The usual difficulty respecting language would have occurred to us, from the manager not knowing either English or French; but, fortunately, a gentleman I had met at Mynheer Ongre's, happened to be at Daargradt, who, with great kindness, undertook the troublesome task of interpreter; and procured for us the best accommodations of the house, as well for the evening, as throughout the night.

An old Hollander, who was living in a sort of quiet retirement upon the estate, was seized with sad feelings of alarm at our arrival. Seeing a party of English officers step out of the boat, so very unexpectedly, he could not divest his mind of the sentiment of danger which attaches to the approach of an enemy. He had long been an active supporter of the high democratic party in the seven United Provinces; and, on account of the state of politics, had fled from his country in the year 1787, when the Duke of Brunswick marched a Prussian army into Holland to restore the rights and privileges of the Stadtholder. A conscious feeling renewed all the poor old man's terrors,

and begat the impresson that we came as foes to disturb him in his peaceful retirement. He felt that he was still adverse to the Stadtholderian interest, and, perhaps, was not aware that age had stamped an imbecility upon his political opinions, as well as caused his hoary locks to excite only sentiments of compassion. The timidity of second childhood was upon him. His years were many, and it might be said of him, as of the *vieu fiscal*, that the high torrent of guilt had ceased to flow in his veins. We assured him of his safety, and endeavored to assuage his fears, by observing that whatever might have been formerly, or still further, might now be his opinions, he had nothing to fear. With difficulty we did prevail upon him to take his seat at the supper table, but he could not command enough of self-possession to eat: he was agitated, looked uneasy and alarmed, fixed his eye on the scarlet uniform, and exhibited general marks of restlessness, and apprehension!—The supper-cloth was scarcely removed, when he retired—and we saw him no more. Soon after the old Batavian left us, we went to our hammocks; but passed a sad restless night, owing to our being assailed by hosts of musquitoes, whose venomous bitings wholly deprived us of sleep.

*The party leave Daargradt with the morning tide, intending to proceed to Mynheer Roboloski's. Call at Essendam. Kindly detained by M. Abbensets. Make a visit of acknowledgment to Mynheer Schneider. Cards introduced after dinner at Essendam. Evening promenade to Sans Souci. Wretched annoyance of mosquitoes. Afflicted appearance of the party. Departure from Essendam. Conclusion of the expedition. General remarks. Novelty and hospitality. Civility an inadequate term. Mode of travelling highly commodious. Sameness of scenery relieved. Pelucid water of the river. Novel appearance of the forest, the boat, &c. A floating island. Difficulties ideal. Insects not troublesome in the woods. A peculiar mark of politeness.*

Berbische:

WE rose early, in order to make the round of the plantation and the negro yard previous to our departure, and before ten o'clock we took our seats in the boat, availing ourselves of the early tide, with the intention of hanging our hammocks at Mynheer Roboloski's in the evening—and of proceeding on the morrow to New Amsterdam. M. Roboloski had made a visit to the British officers at the fort, and had very pressingly invited us to his plantation; which we understood to be situated on the opposite bank of the river, between Mynheer Abbenset's and the town, and very



conveniently for becoming the last place of rest upon our excursion. A little past noon we arrived at Effendam, intending to make only an *en passant* call upon Mynheer Abbensets; who received us with all the kindness and cordiality of a friend; nor would he hear of our going further, but insisted that we should pass the remainder of the day with him; and, the more effectually to reconcile the delay, he assured us that the tide would not carry us so far as M. Roboloski's by night. Finding this to be the case, we yielded to his kind solicitations: and the more readily from our knowing that the town and the fort were still within the morrow's journey; and from it having been proved to us by the test of experience, that neither shore of the river could supply us with more desirable quarters. Having agreed to pass the night at Effendam, we rested for a short time, and then made a little excursion across the river to offer thanks to M. Schneider, for the information he had given us respecting our journey; and to see the sugar works at Mr. Blair's estate. As soon as we returned, a well-served dinner with plenty of good wines were set before us; and the generous Abbensets warmly bade us welcome. It is not the custom in these colonies,

as in England, to consume the whole of the afternoon over the bottle. Wine is taken liberally at dinner-time, and the party withdraw from the table very soon after. At M. Abbenfet's, cards were introduced almost as soon as we had dined, and we played whist until obliquity tempered the scorching rays of the sun, when we engaged in a pleasant promenade about the plantation, and proceeded as far as *Sans Souci*, the adjoining estate, to call on Mynheer Abbenfet's nephew.

Soon after we returned from our walk, the supper-board was spread, and to crown the evening, some very fine old Hollands, and the social pipe were introduced. You will perhaps be surprized to learn, that I was the only one who could not enjoy this part of the repast: most of the officers have acquired the habit of smoking, and some of them have become such adepts in this, I cannot but add, dirty and inelegant custom—however social—that they can already drink gin, and whiff a pipe or fagar almost as well as any semper-smoking Dutchman of the colony! You will probably envy them the accomplishment as little as I do! We went to our hammocks very soon after

supper, hoping, by a long sleep, to relieve the heavy fatigue of two disturbed and restless nights ; but we were sadly disappointed ! the tormenting musquitoes again besieged us, and the third night proved no less sleepless than the two preceding. The heat and itching from former bitings—the pain of new and acute punctures—and the still more wearisome buzzing of the insects in our ears combined in such utter annoyance, as not only to deprive us of sleep, but of all rest and ease. Even the quiet of lying still was unattainable. The irritation, caused by the pain and excessive itching, rendered us quite feverish, and with the weariness and languor arising from want of sleep, made us really ill. At length, grown impatient of suffering, and finding it impossible to rest in our hammocks, we got up, walked about the room, washed with cold water, rubbed ourselves with orange juice, and with limes, then opened the windows, shook our hammocks, beat about the room with cloths and handkerchiefs, and tried all the various means of driving out the insects, and obtaining relief : but in vain, all our efforts failed of success. Immitigable torment pursued us, and we were compelled to drag out a most wearisome and comfortless night.



Early in the morning we left our room oppressed with feverish feelings, and a sense of general stupor:—and almost blind! Our eye-lids were swollen and heavy—our whole faces tumefied and inflamed. It were difficult to convey to you a just idea of our afflicted appearance. Perhaps if you call to your imagination the visage of a sot, after he has devoted two or three whole nights to the bottle; then, before he has had time to sleep off his intoxication, subject him to an attack of “St. Anthony,” you may conceive a tolerable representation of the matin-countenances of your friend, and his sleepless musquito-bitten comrades.

We breakfasted with M. Abbensets, and at nine o'clock embarked for New Amsterdam. The negroes took no rest between Essendam and the town. They cheerfully pulled the oars for five hours without intermission, in order to reach the landing place before the turn of the tide; and all the relief they sought, throughout the whole of this time, was that of occasionally taking up a handful of water from the river, and pouring it upon their oars, to prevent them from becoming hot and dry, and thereby

blistering their hands. At two o'clock on the 23d of June we finished our journey, and were again safely on shore at the government landing-place at New Amsterdam.

You will feel that the excursion was, altogether, one of high interest and gratification: but I have proceeded in such minute, and (I fear you will say) tedious detail, that very little remains to be offered by way of general remark.

The novelty which presented itself to our observation was not more striking than the unbounded hospitality, which universally met us at every place of call. Although unexpected intruders, we were every where received with a cordial urbanity, which is very inadequately expressed by the common term *civility*. It seemed to be the study of all, who should most serve, and oblige us. Not satisfied with administering to us the best accommodations of the house, whilst we remained with them, a generous regard for our comfort extended their liberality yet further, and they either openly, or privately, contributed to our convenience, by adding to our travelling supply. Porter, wine, and spirits, food and

fruit, and plantains for the negroes, all found their way into the boat.

Our mode of travelling was in itself highly commodious, and afforded many facilities. The party sat together as comfortably as in a small room on shore : we advanced at ease, and were scarcely sensible of any motion : by the awning we were protected from the sun ; and from the open windows at the sides, we had always a stream of cool air. Enough of room was afforded for provisions, wine, clothes, and all other stores of the journey ; also convenient stowage for whatever specimens we might collect. Together with these accommodations a secure harbour was found for the boat at every plantation, and our slaves either fed themselves from the provisions of the vessel, or foraged among the negroes of the estates ; so that we had no care concerning either servants or cattle, carriage or roads.

The variety in point of scenery you will have perceived was not very great, but the inanimate sameness of wood and water was pleasantly relieved by the occasional openings of the different plantations. In some parts of



the river, the water was singularly still and clear, and with its sylvan borders exhibited a novelty of peculiar feature. Its smooth and lucid surface formed a perfect mirror, so completely reflecting every thing around, that it seemed difficult to discover how we were supported—by what means suspended, as it were, in the centre of space. At the sides of the river no line of termination could be distinguished. It was not seen where the water ceased, or where the land commenced; but the trees, on each border, being within the edge of the water, were so distinctly reflected as to convey the semblance of a forest, growing upwards and downwards from the same roots. The boat was reflected in a similar manner; as was likewise the unclouded canopy of the skies. The watery medium made no impression upon the eye—but the open azure expanse was seen the same, whether we looked upwards or downwards. We seemed suspended in the centre of a hollow globe, having the same concave arch above and below, with an inverted and an upright forest on either hand. At one spot we met a small island, floating down the still river, with a variety of plants and shrubs growing upon it; and from the water being invisible, the perfect reflection of

this little plantation gave it the appearance of a small clump of young trees calmly moving in the midst of space, with each plant growing perpendicularly upwards and downwards, in precise resemblance. If we held out a hand, or an oar over the side of the boat, the same was seen below, without discovering the limpid medium between them. In short, we seemed only to move, like our globe itself, in ethereal space.

The difficulties which many of the gentlemen of the colony had urged, as necessarily attendant upon the expedition, proved to be ideal. Scarcely did any obstacle oppose itself to our convenience—none to our progress: nor until the last three nights had any thing occurred to interrupt the full enjoyment of the excursion. Indeed the torment of these nights served only as a variety, which placed in a stronger light the many facilities we had met with; for, amidst the woods, and at the estates far up the river, we had almost wholly escaped the annoyance of insects. Musquitoes did not seem to inhabit the depths of the forest. In these parts we had also found the air cooler, and the land less heated than where it was cleared of wood, and more open.

I must not neglect to inform you of a custom which we observed to be very prevalent, it being an act of politeness which, to Europeans, seemed no less singular than novel. As a mark of attention the gentlemen of the different plantations usually accompanied us to our sleeping room, at the time of our going to bed, when, on taking their leave for the night, they concluded the compliments of the day in the following terms, viz. “S’il y a d’autre chose, Messieurs, dont vous avez besoin, il n’en faut que demander au Garçon—cela n’est pas mon affaire\*.” This was true West Indian complaisance. It was a branch of hospitality that was not familiar to us, being an accommodation not usually found in the list of European civilities. If your ignorance of tropical habits, and the common customs of slavery should prevent you from comprehending the extent of it, ask me, when I return to England, and I will explain it to you more fully.

Adieu.

\* If there is any thing else you wish for, you need only ask the boy: that does not concern me!

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.













